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UNCERTAIN LOCATION OF FEB GRADUATION SPARKS OUTRAGE AT LOST TRADITION

TODD BALFOUR / COURTESY PHOTO

The class of 2022.5 skied down the Middlebury Chapel hill on campus instead of the Snow Bowl due to extremely cold temperatures.

By WILL REED
News Writer

Middlebury College is set to witness history on Saturday, Feb. 3, when the largest Feb class in its history will graduate. While the class of 2023.5 will still ski down during their graduation, as is tradition, the location for the annual Ski Down remains uncertain. The college plans to make the final decision on its location by Jan. 25, stating that if there is enough snow at the Middlebury Chapel Hill to ski down, the event will be held there.

In a graduation invitation letter sent to families of graduates in December, the college listed the location for the celebration as the Chapel Hill. Students were unaware of such a change from the traditional ski down the Snow Bowl until their families informed them.

The Feb graduation at the Snow Bowl, where graduates ski down in their caps and gowns, has been a revered Middlebury rite since 1987. However, this year, the event may be moved to the Chapel Hill on campus — a location that was utilized in last year's Feb Celebration for the class of 2022.5 when sub-zero temperatures passed through Middlebury.

The Feb classes of 2022.5 and 2023.5, consisting of 200 and 233 students respectively, stand out as the two largest

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"THE MIDDLEBURY MAFIA": *Do alumni and students dominate the corporate world?*

By TEJAS SRINIVASAN
Editor at Large

With every new academic year comes a new class of seniors making LinkedIn posts about their post-graduation plans. These announcements range from "I'd like to thank my parents and teachers…" to "I wouldn't be in this position if it wasn't for Middlebury…". One field that is you can always expect to see well represented at the college is finance.

An article in The Messenger in November 2023 titled "Move Aside Harvard and Wharton. The 'Middlebury Mafia' Is Taking Over Wall Street" covered the large number of Middlebury alumni in leadership positions on Wall Street, including Morgan Stanley CEO Ted Pick and Goldman Sachs President and COO John Waldron.

"Not only was Middlebury playing host to a few future Wall Streeters, it was a veritable farm team of financial executive talent between 1989 and 1992," wrote author Thornton McEnery, who went on to cite several other high-level financiers at various firms in the article.

Middlebury does not offer degrees in business or finance, and professes a commitment to the liberal arts and sciences, so such a phenomenon is somewhat curious. It is the most common career field for alumni, with 19% pursuing financial servces, according to the Center for Careers and Internships (CCI).

Alec Sherman '24, an International Politics and Economics Major joining Morgan Stanley as an analyst after graduation, cites the well-roundedness of a liberal arts education as a key factor in preparation for a career in finance.

"Middlebury prepares students to be extremely well-rounded with a diverse set of interests, rather than aiming to train students in different financial models or interview techniques," Sherman said. "Ultimately, everything you need for these jobs can be learned on the desk."

Erick Gong, an associate professor of economics who also worked at Morgan Stanley prior to joining academia, believes that financial institutions are looking for fast-learners and critical thinkers, regardless of subject area.

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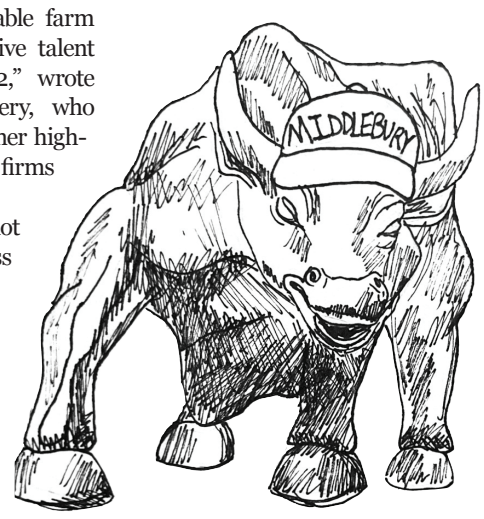

SKILES ROBERTS-SALVADOR

LOCAL

Expansion of childcare centers to add over 100 spots for local children

By MADELEINE KAPTEIN
Local Editor

It is widely acknowledged that Vermont is facing an ongoing childcare crisis, which creates challenges for Middlebury College faculty and staff with young children, who are not guaranteed childcare spots. Two recent developments in childcare projects in Middlebury will offer partial alleviation of the issue, reflecting the college and community's efforts to improve local childcare capacity.

Red Clover Children's Center, located within The Congregational Church of Middlebury, opened on Jan. 15.

Otter Creek Childcare Center received a permit from the Town of Middlebury in December to begin construction on their Community Child Care Expansion Project this spring following years of planning, which it anticipates will open in the fall of 2025. The college-subsidized project will combine Otter Creek with College Street Children's Center, more than doubling the two facilities' existing capacities separately.

The nonprofit childcare advocacy organization Let's Grow Kids reported in 2022 that 471 infants and 240 toddlers (ages 1–3 years old) in Addison County are likely to need childcare. However, available capacity at the time of the report allowed for only 148 infants and 111 toddlers to receive care.

Red Clover will add six spots for infants and 18 spots for toddlers, while Otter Creek estimates adding 20 spots for children under two years old, approximately 10 spots for two-year-olds and between 33 and 47 spots for preschoolers.

Tessa Dearborn, Red Clover's founding director, said that planning for the Red Clover center began about two years ago, when church leaders thought about the child care crisis and the fact that the Church's three classrooms went unused six days of the week. A group of volunteer board members worked to transform the space to house a non-profit that would help fill the gaps in high-quality, reliable childcare for working families in their community.

"The process ebbed and flowed through hopeful and terrifying in the sense of the costs and all of the things that would go into making this happen," Dearborn told The Campus.

The issue of initial seed cost was resolved by a $200,000 donation from local nonprofit Table 21 and a $360,000 donation from an anonymous donor, according to reporting from the Addison Independent. Vermont's 2023 Child Care Bill — which will invest $125 million into Vermont's child care system annually going forward — also promised significant financial security for the establishment of Red Clover and will qualify some families for tuition subsidies, according to Dearborn.

Having worked in early childhood education for more than a decade, Dearborn was hired by the Church's Board of Directors in late September as Red Clover's

THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS / MADELEINE KAPTEIN

Opening of Red Clover Childcare Center and expansion of Otter Creek Childcare Center to add up to 101 local childcare slots total

Local photographer Caleb Kenna captures a wide audience

CALEB KENNA/COURTESY PHOTO

By EMILY HOGAN
Local Editor

For local artist Caleb Kenna, making a career of photography is a great way to interact with the world. Middlebury might know Kenna's photographs of the town of Middlebury and the Middlebury campus are through their frequent features on the college's social media accounts, his photos have a much larger reach beyond the 05753 zip code.

Kenna, 53, began photographing decades ago after a high school photography class spurred his interest in the art form. In the class, students were given an assignment to photograph strangers.

"You would just walk up to somebody with a camera and say, 'Can I take your picture?'," Kenna told The Campus

Kenna began his career in photojournalism, working at Vermont newspapers like the Addison Independent and the Rutland Herald. In 2000, he started freelancing for The New York Times, The Boston Globe and other similarly-sized newspapers. Kenna has also spent a number of years photographing for the non-profit environmental organization Vermont Land Trust, where he photographed conserved lands as well as candid portraits of people working.

While

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Sheldon Museum brings in Middlebury community through holiday train
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Ross Dining Hall, The Grille adjust hours as staff numbers fluctuate

By SUSANNA SCHATZ
Senior News Editor

Ross Dining Hall has changed its hours and offerings for the second time this year. Starting at the beginning of J-Term, the dining hall closes between 3:30 and 5:30 p.m., and does not serve breakfast until 10 a.m. on weekends, a departure from the continuous dining that began this fall. Ross has also returned to a more varied menu, serving options other than the more limited range of pub food favorites it provided in the fall.

Dan Detora, executive director of Food Service Operations explained the reasons for the change in hours. Staying open continuously from 7 a.m. until 8:30 p.m. put a strain on the Ross Dining staff, Detora stated.

"There really was no down time for them to have a break," he wrote in an email to The Campus.

Detora added that Dining Services currently has eight open full-time positions and is not fully staffed, making it harder for Ross to stay open all day long. This marks a continuation in understaffing in the dining halls that has been an issue since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic.

There is also a need for downtime to turn off equipment in the dining halls between meals. With continuous dining, this was not possible.

"We need to have time to properly shut down and clean the equipment, particularly the dish machine. The continuous operation caused major issues with our equipment," Detora wrote.

Finally, the lack of student traffic in the dining halls on weekend mornings led to the decision to open Ross for brunch at 10 a.m. on the weekends. "The volume during the early morning hours on the weekend is very slow and does not require two dining halls open," Detora added.

Student Government Association (SGA) President Abed Abbas '24 told The Campus in the fall that he saw the shift to continuous dining as a positive change. Regarding the recent change in Ross hours, Abbas said that it is not ideal but necessary.

"It's unfortunate that hours have changed," Abbas said. "But this was a result of something we don't really have a control over as the dish washing machine kept breaking down for operating all day."

Abbas shared his concern that Ross being closed between lunch and dinner may be more of an issue come spring semester when students have busier schedules than they do during J-Term.

"The point of having that extended period is to accommodate for students who are busy during lunch time and have that window available," Abbas said.

Ross introduced continuous dining in the fall to combat the lunch rush that has been a challenge in the dining halls in the past. By and large, there was a positive response from students to this change. Emma Cortina '24.5 appreciated continuous dining with her busy class schedule.

"It was much needed for students, like myself, who had class during regular lunch hours and would otherwise be left without an option for food," Cortina said. "It also allowed for spontaneous community and socialization." She expressed concern that without Ross open between 3:30 and 5:30 p.m., students will lack a place to get meals and snacks, as well as missing the social benefits continuous dining brought.

Detora emphasized that this change was necessary to accommodate the schedules of Ross Dining Hall staff. He said that staff, particularly managers, have been working overtime to keep up with the continuous dining hours.

"When not fully staffed we cannot offer our normal services and menu," Detora wrote.

In addition to the changes in hours, Ross now serves a different menu, more closely resembling the offerings of years past and of the other two dining halls instead of pub classics.

"We are trying to go back to a more diverse menu which will not only include pub food, but other traditional student favorites," Detora wrote. "We are trying to give students more variety within the dining halls."

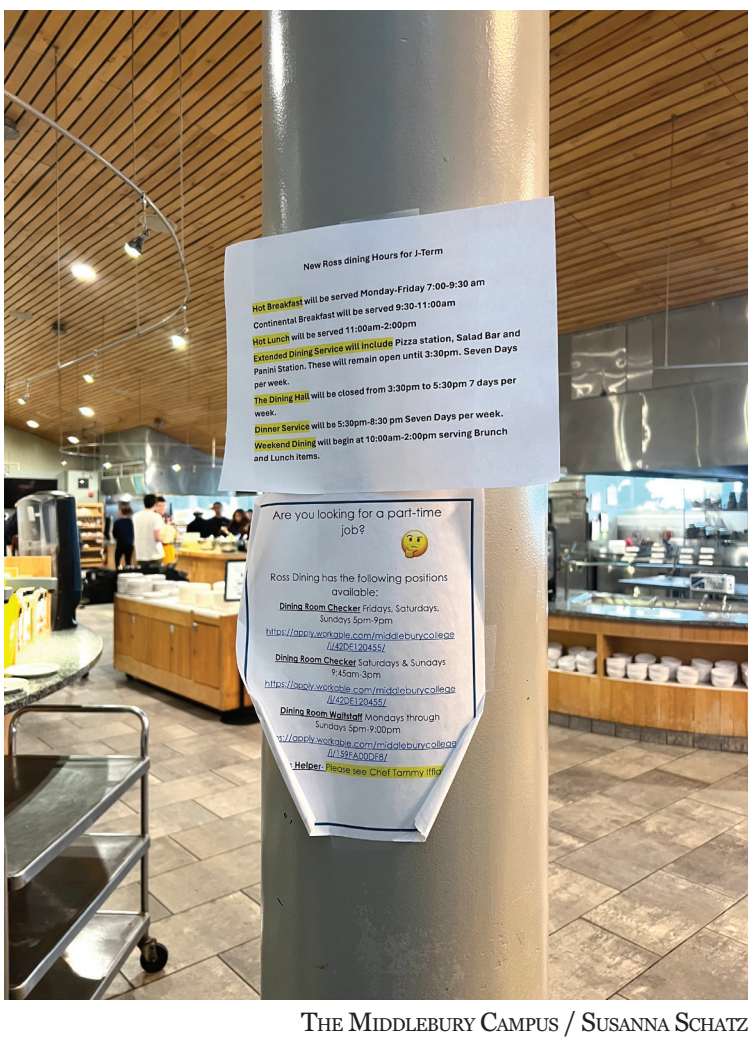
The Grille has extended its hours during J-Term and is now open from 5 p.m. until 11:45 p.m. In the fall, The Grille was open only from 11:30 a.m. until 2 p.m. due to staffing shortages.

"It has been a real struggle within all of dining to find and retain staff," Detora told The Campus in the fall.

Sarah Kimmel '24 shared her appreciation for the reinstatement of late-night Grille hours. "It's a super fun place to go with friends after a night out or to get snacks for a movie night," Kimmel said. "I'm grateful that it has been able to open given the staff shortages, but I wish the school would give staff better pay given how late they work."

Abbas noted that the SGA hopes to bring back more late-night dining options soon, including efforts to bring back 10 O'Clock Ross. "Compared to last year, we're doing much better, but we need student input to know how to direct our efforts," he said.

Detora added that while the dining halls see a slightly lower volume of students during J-Term compared to the fall and spring semesters, if the new Ross Dining Hall hours work well during J-Term, they will continue for the spring semester.


New Ross dining Hours for J-Term
Hot Breakfast will be served Monday-Friday 7:00-9:30 am
Continental Breakfast will be served 9:30-11:00am
Hot Lunch will be served 11:00am-2:00pm
Extended Dining Service will include Pizza station, Salad Bar and Panini Station. These will remain open until 3:30pm. Seven Days per week.
The Dining Hall will be closed from 3:30pm to 5:30pm 7 days per week.
Dinner Service will be 5:30pm-8:30 pm Seven Days per week.
Weekend Dining will begin at 10:00am-2:00pm serving Brunch and Lunch items.
Are you looking for a part-time job?
Ross Dining has the following positions available:
Dining Room Checker Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays 5pm-9pm
https://apply.workable.com/middleburycollege/j/42DE120455/
Dining Room Checker Saturdays & Sundays 9:45am-3pm
https://apply.workable.com/middleburycollege/j/42DE120455/
Dining Room Waitstaff Mondays through Sundays 5pm-9:00pm
Helper: Please see Chef Tammy if

THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS / SUSANNA SCHATZ

Dining Services informed students of the changes to the hours of Ross Dining by posting notices in and around the dining hall.

Uncertain location of Feb graduation sparks outrage at lost tradition

TODD BALFOUR / COURTESY PHOTO

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graduating Feb classes in history. These numbers are mostly due to a higher number of students that took leaves of absences during the Covid-19 pandemic. Bussing larger class sizes and their families to the Snow Bowl presented logistical challenges during previous graduations, and positive feedback from last year's venue switch supported the decision to potentially change the location for this year's celebration.

"We received a lot of positive feedback from graduates and their families after last year's Ski Down, which was moved to campus because of historically low temperatures,"Jon Reidel, the director of media relations for Middlebury College, wrote in an email to The Campus. "The various campus departments held a debrief afterward to evaluate the pivot to the campus and determined that the Chapel Hill provided a more inclusive, more welcoming experience for students and guests."

The college emphasized that the on-campus location promotes inclusivity, particularly for students with mobility challenges.

"The move to campus creates a convenient experience for families and friends who can move easily from the ceremony in Virtue Fieldhouse to McCullough Student Center where they can wait for the Ski Down to start," Reidel wrote. "The viewing area at Chapel hill is much larger than at the Snow Bowl, so everyone has a good view of the action and can participate in the tradition. Following the Ski-Down, it's a short walk to Proctor Hall, where lunch is served after the event."

Kate Sadoff '23.5, supported the potential relocation to the Chapel Hill site.

"I think having the Ski Down at The Chapel just makes sense. It makes the ceremony more accessible to non-skiers and more accessible to family members," Sadoff said.

The location change left some students who were expecting the traditional Snow Bowl Ski Down disappointed.

"I was frustrated that the administration decided to change locations without considering student input," said Lucas Tomas '23.5. "It's a long-standing tradition for a reason and I think a lot of students feel an attachment to that sense of heritage."

Daphne West '23.5, described her disappointment about the location change and how it disrupts important Feb traditions.

"It's an emotionally charged decision for a lot of us, especially given how little say we seem to have in the matter. The Snow Bowl ski down has been a promised tradition to generations of Febs. As a class of students who have been here since before the pandemic, it is sad to be robbed of a memory so unique to the Middlebury Feb experience," West said.

The committee responsible for the switch said that they considered opinions from current and past Febs, aiming for a positive and inclusive experience for all.

"We looked carefully at both options and discussed how best to ensure a positive, inclusive experience for all. We heard from Febs and Feb graduates with differing perspectives, some advocating for the Snowbowl and others for Chapel Hill. The ultimate goal is to provide a great experience for 233 students and the 1,000-plus family members and friends," Reidel wrote.

The unexpected venue change has sparked students to call for a reversal of the decision. A petition, signed by 568 individuals — including students, parents and alumni — expressed widespread frustration with the decision and called for a reconsideration by the administration.

The surge of discontent, along with weather considerations regarding amounts of snow in the days leading up to Feb. 3, has impacted the administration's decision to delay the final decision until Jan. 25, highlighting the significant weight of student concerns on the decision-making process.

"I did sign the petition and I'm not an original Feb, so the location doesn't matter as much to me, but it was cool to see how the community came together for a cause they found important," Mira Irfan '23.5 said. "I do also like the idea of Chapel Hill because it allows parents to visibly see the faces of those skiing down, so I can see the benefits of either location."

Piper Ackermann '23.5, spearheaded the student petition calling for the college to move the location of the Ski Down back to the Snow Bowl. She highlighted the Snow Bowl's sentimental and cultural importance to Feb Celebration.

"I think graduating mid-year in a small class is really hard in the first place. The quintessential Vermont–Middlebury experience that's so advertised to students and people beyond the college includes the Feb ski down," Ackermann said. "The event has become a pinnacle point of Middlebury and is deeply intertwined with its culture — it has become synonymous with the Middlebury experience itself. The ski down is not a separate and expendable tradition — rather, it has become an integral part of Middlebury's identity."

Feb graduation will begin with a morning ceremony in Virtue Field House, followed by the Ski Down celebration. The precise location for the Ski Down will be decided based on weather conditions, according to the Feb Celebration website.

"The plan is to make the call on January 25. If there is enough snow on campus, the Ski Down will be held on the Chapel Hill. If there is no snow on campus, the Ski Down will be held at the Snowbowl," Reidel wrote.

A committee with students, staff and members of the administration will meet in the fall to decide the best venue for future Feb Celebrations, according to Reidel.

The Campus is hiring!

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New night skiing program opens at the Snow Bowl after renovations

By LIV SANCHEZ
Staff Writer

VIOLET GORDON '26.5 / COURTESY PHOTO

On Dec. 15 the Snowbowl held its grand opening for night skiing. The event included fireworks, live music, and other après-ski festivities.

After years of building excitement, this winter, the Middlebury Snow Bowl has opened for night skiing for the first time. The bowl is now open for night skiing Wednesday through Friday, when the Sheehan lift runs until 8:45 p.m. instead of the usual 4 p.m.

The initiative was largely spearheaded by Michael Hussey, who has served as Director of the Snowbowl for six years. Hussey told The Campus that the idea for night skiing had been brought up before he was hired, and shortly after he joined the team, he presented the concept and the process of adding night skiing to the Snow Bowl to the administration. He recognized the endeavor's potential to engage further with the town of Middlebury and other local communities through skiing.

For the past 20 years, there has not been an alpine ski team at Middlebury High School, because the students were not able to get out of school to train before the Snow Bowl closed at 4 p.m. The high school ski team, formerly made up of both downhill and cross-country skiers, became a cross-country team entirely. Before 2003, the downhill team had been a state championship team for a number of years. "felt The way to recapture that was to find a time that they could ski, which is under the lights at night. So we've been working towards that for the last six years," Hussey said.

On Jan. 12, the Middlebury High School club team finally came to train during night skiing hours for the first time after the 20-year hiatus, just as Hussey had hoped.

Middlebury College students also benefit from the new addition. Zach Utz '26 told The Campus that he appreciates the new schedule's extended hours.

"It's nice to have more hours to ski," he said. "It's definitely easier for a lot of people to get out there and ski now, and I think it's a great addition."

Attendance has been variable in the early days of the program.

"Economically, though, it might be losing money," said Malachi Schiffer-Delegard '26, who has gone night skiing twice since the beginning of J-Term. "Because realistically, there weren't that many people there when I was there."

He added that the limited availability of runs at the Snow Bowl at night may be impacting the number of people choosing to participate thus far.

"I think it's because of the lack of more advanced runs," Schiffer-Delegard said. "I think it's great for beginners, but there's only one run. And it's really short, about a minute long."

The Sheehan Lift is the only open lift for night skiing.

Although some noted the lower number of skiers at night, Utz appreciates the opportunity to practice without the crowds. "I really like night skiing, and getting a bunch of runs in," he said. "And even if there are fewer people, that makes it nicer."

Hussey does not seem to share the same economic concerns as Schiffer-Delegard

"A lot of the revenue for the Snow Bowl comes from the community for sure — season passes and business that the community brings," Hussey said.

Hussey noted that everything thus far has been running smoothly and said he has only received positive feedback so far.

"We've been seeing just about the same number of cars in the parking lot as we do during the day, so it's been great," Hussey said. "The ability to bring back a ski team at the high school is a component of this, but it drives a whole bunch of other parts of the culture, downstream of that."

The Middlebury College Ski Patrol, made up of trained Middlebury students, have adapted quickly to the changes.

"Our standard operating procedures are all the same, other than adding a few more procedures into our sweeps to ensure that we're seeing into the woods properly," said Finn Higgins, the assistant director of the Snow Bowl, and leader of the Ski Patrol during night skiing hours.

The Ski Patrol must conduct sweeps across the mountain to make sure that there are no skiers unable to complete their descent, a task that is obviously made cumbersome by the darkness.

He noted that there are plenty of students available to work the night shifts, and that there have been no staffing issues so far.

Middlebury College Dining Services has taken over the restaurant in the lodge at the Snow Bowl, according to Hussey. In an effort to create a more lively atmosphere, live music is played in the lodge during night skiing hours. "We're just trying to build that vibe," Hussey said.

"I think it's doing exactly what we had hoped it would do, as a community piece, and we're seeing a really vibrant college population at the bowl at night as well, so that's super," he added. "It's really been a highlight for me and for us as a team to see it working."

"THE MIDDLEBURY MAFIA"

Do alumni and students dominate the corporate world?

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"Across all the departments, Middlebury does a very good job of developing students that have all of these skills," Gong said.

While The Messenger article found correlations between Middlebury graduates and success in finance, there was not much pointing to causation. Contrary to its title, the article indicated that many of the Middlebury alumni in executive positions did in fact attend MBA and graduate programs. Because of this, Gong suggested that there i's a confounding problem when looking at Middlebury's presence on Wall Street: It is impossible to determine whether it is Middlebury alone or other institutions that account for someone's success in the financial industry. Regardless, he is optimistic that students at Middlebury are prepared for the fast-paced, self-driven and problem-solving environment that finance often demands of its employees.

A quick look at the mission statements of Middlebury, and some of the leading financial institutions, shows that they purport similar values: Middlebury "[fosters] the inquiry, equity, and agency necessary for [students] to practice ethical citizenship." Goldman Sachs, Morgan Stanley and J.P Morgan Chase, all include "integrity" in their core values.

Gong also spoke about the importance of ethical education in preparation for the competitive environments — and potentially high-stakes situations — that you seen in corporate finance. He believes that Middlebury provides students with a strong ethical foundation with policies such as the honor code.

"I think it's the daily decisions we make, in our courses, and how we treat other people… [the economics department] has thought a lot about the honor code… I think it encourages people to make ethical decisions," Gong said.

Both Gong and Sherman emphasized that it is not direct academic study of financial subjects and services that allow Middlebury students to stand out, but rather the plentitude of wide-ranging opportunities that students take advantage of here. Katya Juarez '24, another senior who plans to work in finance after graduation, said that it is often the fact that students take a language or have a major or minor in an entirely different subject that allows them to stand out.

"I think Midd grads have experienced so much success on Wall Street because more often than not, they come into their jobs already trained to think creatively and to speak up when they have ideas," a recent graduate who is working as an investment banking analyst at Goldman Sachs said.

A common misconception — especially around campus — is that the economics major is a direct ticket to employment in the financial industry. Tanya Byker, an associate professor of economics who briefly worked in investment banking, told The Campus that she wanted the economics major and a career in finance to be decoupled in people's minds.

"I really want to emphasize that economics is not primarily a pathway to finance. Our major is a pathway to many things. And, meanwhile, the path to finance could go through many other majors," Byker said.

Besides a well-rounded academic culture, Middlebury's small size and tight-knit alumni network are often celebrated. Sherman said that members of the alumni community are always available to speak with prospective candidates and mentor them through the application and internship processes.

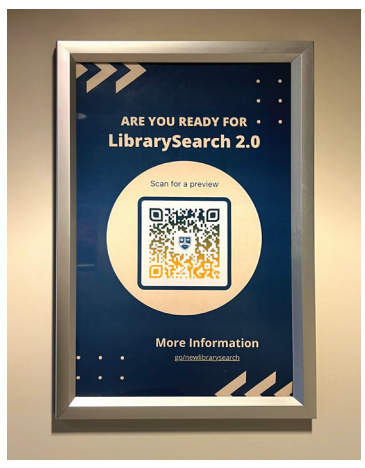
Juarez, who is also a Peer Career Advisor with the CCI, indicated that conversations on campus about career paths in finance also help younger students become more familiar with the process of entering the industry.

"A lot of times with finance, the earlier you are able to get your foot in the door, the easier it is to stay at the same firm or move to the next," Juarez said.

Ultimately, a career in finance is a choice that is independent of college or major. The 'Middlebury Mafia' outlined in The Messenger may or may not be a coincidence,; but for those people who are interested in Wall Street, Middlebury creates graduates who are well equipped to learn on the job quickly and make informed decisions to solve the problems thrown at them. Students are also given a myriad of connections to tap into Middlebury's expansive alumni network. The mafia is always there to help.

Middlebury launches new library search system to positive reviews

By EDITH MAUCH
Staff Writer



THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS/SUSANNA SCHATZ

On Dec. 20 Middlebury libraries switched their database software, a transition they refer to as "LibrarySearch 2.0."

Introducing Library 2.0, Middlebury's new library search system, which aims to simplify and consolidate the library's search interface for students, faculty and staff.

The software launched at Middlebury's Vermont campus and the Monterey Institute of International Studies (MIIS) on Dec. 20, 2023, after months of planning. While it does not change what resources the college has access to — all of the journals, articles and books will remain available to use — the searchability and user-friendliness has been updated to better serve library patrons.

The updated system is more similar to a search engine like Google, which yields more results for each prompt, unlike the relatively limited pool of results provided in the previous system, according to Bryan Carson, systems librarian at Davis Family Library. Carson sees the new software as a major improvement.

There were three main reasons for the new system, according to Dean of the Library Mike Roy.

"First, the system we were using was no longer being developed at all, and so we were stuck with the old system that was not keeping up with best practices in library system design. Two, and related to number one, the new system has a much powerful and accurate algorithm for indexing and therefore allowing for discovery of library resources," he said.

The new platform will also allow Middlebury to share resources with its new partnerships with the University of Vermont, Connecticut College, Trinity College and Wesleyan University, according to Roy.

Roy hopes that the new system will not only be well-received by library patrons, but also by the staff who work there.

"The system also provides far better reporting functions, so that we can gain deeper insights into how our resources are being used, which in turn will help us make better decisions about library resources. In this way, it will make my job easier," he said. "Our hope is that the new system will ultimately make their work easier, but this is a big change and there is always a learning curve associated with any new workflow."

The implementation and development of a new system was not without its challenges.

"The biggest challenge was finding time to learn the new system, convert all the dates and make the many, many decisions that configuring a new system requires, all while continuing to run the old system," Roy said.

Despite the extra time that switching systems required, Roy praised the team for simultaneously handling both workloads during the summer and fall.

"I'd say the biggest challenge for us at MIIS has been the fact that we're a very small team to begin with, and we had some key people out of office during much of the migration process, so we were trying to keep up with the extra migration-related activities and cover normal day-to-day processes," Lydia Gentry, digital services associate at MIIS wrote in an email to The Campus. She credited the Vermont campus team's staff for support.

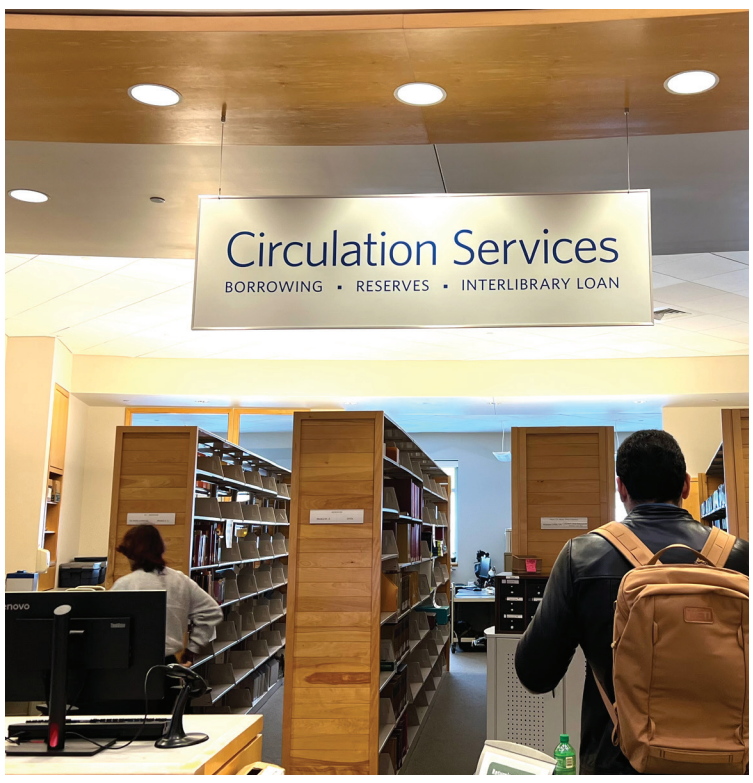
Davis Family Library has experienced understaffing in recent years, as four staff members left their positions last spring, creating challenges for the remaining librarians to meet their usual responsibilities under an intensified workload.

According to Roy and others on the library staff, feedback for the newly introduced system, though minimal so far, has been mostly positive. "It's early days, but so far so good," Roy said.

"There will inevitably be bumps in the road and unforeseen issues that we'll have to resolve as the semester starts up and students and faculty start to use it more, but so far, most of the process has been fairly smooth. I've been pleasantly surprised by the amount of positive feedback I've received at this point," Gentry wrote.

Arabella Holzapfel, electronic resources manager and library systems specialist at Davis Family Library, has also received positive feedback from patrons.

"It has been a long time coming…[I'm] really grateful we've been able to do this," Holzapfel said.



THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS / SUSANNA SCHATZ

LOCAL PHOTOGRAPHER CALEB KENNA CAPTURES A WIDE AUDIENCE

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focusing in recent years on his own portfolio, Kenna has continued to work on assignments for weekly newspaper Seven Days VT and for specific clients.

Fresh accomplishments for Kenna include publishing two photo essays in The New York Times. Kenna published the first, titled "Behold Vermont, From Above," amidst the Covid-19 lockdowns in the summer of 2020, as a part of the newspaper's "The World Through a Lens" series. The spread included 17 stunning drone photos of Vermont landscapes.

"Taking drone photos, for me, was just a really great form of social distancing," Kenna said." It's a very meditative process, just going out and seeing the landscape."

His second photo essay in The New York Times was titled "Vermont, Dressed in Snow," also as a part of the "The World Through a Lens" series. Published in 2022, the spread similarly featured drone shots of snowy Middlebury and other Vermont towns.

Kenna first took up drone photography back in 2017.

"It basically just provides this incredible perspective on the landscape that is hard to get with a regular camera," he said.

Before acquiring his own drone, Kenna hired an airplane once or twice a year to get similar shots of landscapes.

"But that's expensive and you never know what the weather is and you're a couple thousand feet up," Kenna noted.

A drone allows for a quicker set-up time and easy exploring, he added.

While Kenna often uses a drone for capturing abstract images in landscapes, a drone is not always the best tool for certain projects. In cases of photographing individual or small group portraits, it is easier for Kenna to shoot with a regular camera.

Growing up in Middlebury and Brandon, Vt. with his mother — a German professor at Middlebury for thirty years — the Kenna family name is well-known in the Middlebury community. Kenna now raises a family of his own in the town of Middlebury, which he explained is a large reason why Middlebury and surrounding towns feature so prominently in his photography.

"I do like that but I would also certainly like to expand my range," Kenna said. "I think the most successful pictures are the ones that are more abstract landscapes… It's kind of like a puzzle," he added, referring to the complex patterns he likes to find in landscapes using his drone.

A challenge in Kenna's work has been in continuing to produce interesting, innovative work while living in the same area for years.

"But on the other hand, it really forces you to look and see and wait for weather and stuff like that," he added.

Despite currently spending most of his time in Vermont, Kenna has previously spent time abroad in countries like India capturing on-the-ground photographs.

After publishing his first photo essay in the New York Times in 2020, Kenna gained national exposure that allowed him to work with non-fiction publishing company Schiffer on releasing a book. He released "Art From Above: Vermont" in October 2022. Along with a collection of Kenna's drone photographs, the book features a foreword by Schumann Distinguished Scholar of Environmental Studies Bill McKibben and an introduction by Kenna.

"The process of making that book was a lot of fun," Kenna said. He worked with Oregon-based freelance photo editor Mary Vignoles to sequence the book using a color palette of brown, green and blue to correspond with the changing seasons throughout the photographs.

Vignoles, who has been working with Kenna for years and collaborated with him on building his website, sequenced the photos in the book so that they blend from one color to the next.

"[It's] kind of like a song, you just want somebody to go along with it," she told The Campus.

In addition to keeping an eye on color, Vignoles' editing process involved hours of looking critically at the photos to make sure the best selection of photos were included in the limit that Kenna had given her of about 100 photos to feature in the book.

"Art From Above: Vermont" is currently sold at The Vermont Book Shop in downtown Middlebury. Becky Dayton, owner of Vermont Book Shop, said that the book has sold over 600 copies in the bookstore since it was released nearly two years ago.

COURTESY PHOTO/CALEB KENNA
A Vermont native, Kenna has earned a name for himself in Middlebury as well as nationally through his published work in newspapers like The New York Times.

COURTESY PHOTO/CALEB KENNA
Caleb Kenna began drone photography in 2017, and enjoys finding abstract patterns in landscapes.

"I knew right away that it would be a huge seller," Dayton said, aware that Kenna's profile as a photographer had risen significantly following his features in The New York Times. While sales of "Art From Above: Vermont" have slowed down a little bit since it was published on Oct. 18, 2022, Dayton continues to restock the books in the shop.

"People love to give them to friends and family who are far away to remind them of how beautiful Vermont is," Dayton said.

While Kenna would like to eventually create another book of photographs with a new idea, he is currently working on adding to his portfolio as he sells his photographs directly to clients through his website. His work has previously been featured at the Frog Hollow Craft Center in Burlington, Vt.; Edgewater Gallery in Middlebury, and the Kent Museum in Calais, Vt. In the coming months, his work will be shown by Burlington City Arts at a couple venues around Chittenden County.

"That's been really fun to have that kind of exposure," Kenna said. He added that he also finds social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook helpful in publicizing his new work.

Kenna creates prints of his photography for clients through Donald Ross, a Brandon-based photographer and printer who has known Kenna for over ten years. By using inkjet printing, large printers and fine art archival materials to help Kenna with the printing process, Ross allows Kenna himself to focus on photographing and managing his photography business.

"There is a long tradition in the photographic world of photographers collaborating with fine art printers. And I've been fortunate to enjoy that kind of relationship with Caleb," Ross said.

Kenna's photographs have received not only significant attention but widespread praise, and Kenna said he appreciates the positive comments he receives through social media.

"There is something very gratifying about that when you can, with a couple of clicks, distribute your own photos and get a lot of nice responses," he said, adding that seeing his photographs on walls or in galleries is similarly satisfying.

"He's very talented," Dayton said of Kenna "He's just an artist to keep an eye on".

Sheldon Museum brings in Middlebury community through holiday train exhibit

By EDITH MAUCH
Staff Writer

The Lionel train exhibit, an annual tradition at the Henry Sheldon Museum, recently celebrated the 30th anniversary of its holiday train display. Residents of Middlebury and surrounding towns along with students, faculty and staff from the college visited the exhibit, which featured a three-level two-track train display.

The exhibit ran for roughly two months from Nov. 24 through Jan. 13.

"It is our most popular attraction annually. Thousands of people come to see them over the course of the exhibit run," Allison LaCroix Hayes, collections manager at the Sheldon Museum, told The Campus.

The three levels of trains in the exhibit were set against a backdrop of the Green Mountains that featured an operating ski lift, miniature skiers, snowboarders, rock climbers, bicyclists and more. Local artist and Middlebury graduate Gayl Braisted painted the picturesque background.

The exhibit also included histories of the Middlebury, Rutland, Vt. and Burlington, Vt. railroads and their connections to the Henry Sheldon Museum. The Amtrak train stop in Middlebury opened in the fall of 2022 and is a part of the larger Ethan Allen Express that runs from Burlington through New York City with stops in Rutland and Albany, N.Y.

COURTESY PHOTO/ALLISON LACROIX
The Lionel train exhibit recently concluded its 30th Anniversary celebration at the Henry Sheldon Museum.

This year, the museum added a few new features to the train display, including a drawbridge on the tracks and a hands-on train table for kids. These additions to this year's exhibit made the total display bigger than ever, which forced the museum staff to move it to a larger room in the museum.

The tracks included both Lionel O gauge trains and HO trains, two of the most common types of model trains.

"I personally loved seeing the trains during our annual holiday open house when we get a lot of families and children in. Kids are just in awe of it (and a lot of times their parents are too) so it's great to see that no matter how many years it's been, the excitement never dies down," Aine Powers '24 wrote in an email to The Campus.

Powers, who is also an intern at the Sheldon museum, credited the hard work of the volunteers and engineers who make the exhibit happen each year.

"These guys know more about model trains than anything you can imagine and their passion for it definitely makes the experience that much more worthwhile," Powers wrote.

Although the exhibit is gone for the year, the museum still offers archival research opportunities, and the college has taught courses centered around the museum's collections. A class titled Vermont Collaborations Public Humanities Lab offered this past fall, cross-listed in the American Studies and History of Art and Architecture Departments, examined the museum's archives, institutional history and the history of the Middlebury area.

As of Jan. 13, the Sheldon Museum is currently on its winter break and will re-open in the spring. In the meantime, the museum's website features a virtual exhibit on the history of what used to be known as the Campus Theater and is now the Middlebury Marquis.

COURTESY PHOTO/ALLISON LACROIX
The Sheldon Museum ran its holiday train exhibit for roughly two months.

EXPANSION OF CHILD CARE CENTERS TO ADD OVER ONE HUNDRED SPOTS FOR LOCAL CHILDREN

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than a decade, Dearborn was hired by the Church's Board of Directors in late September as Red Clover's founding director. Striving to create a fair and equitable enrollment and waitlist system for the center, Dearborn landed on a lottery system that ensures inclusion and representation of all ages and gender identities in their classrooms.

Red Clover initially aimed to hire three teachers and open one classroom, but they have since exceeded that goal, hiring seven teachers to staff three classrooms.

"We are genuinely surprised," Dearborn said. "The fact that we're able to open all of the classrooms essentially at the same time is pretty astounding and not at all expected."

Red Clover began gradually by opening one classroom on Jan. 15 for a half day, which allowed children to transition to the school and families to meet teachers before the kids' first full day on Jan. 17. While the second classroom will open on Jan. 29, the infant classroom start date is yet to be determined.

Meanwhile, the Otter Creek Center is awaiting the physical copy of their granted construction permit and an environmental-impact review from the State of Vermont, both of which are expected to be received in February before they can take their next steps, according to Linda January, executive director at the center.

When the project is completed, the carriage barn that is attached to the current building — an old farmhouse at 150 Weybridge Street — will be removed and replaced with a 13,000 square foot addition. The expanded building will allow space for 13 total classrooms, a commercial kitchen, dedicated office space, three playgrounds and a large parking lot by a new main entrance, which will allow for safer entrance and exit of the building, according to January.

Removal of the barn and preloading of the site will happen over the summer and further construction will begin in the fall. January estimated that the construction will take about a year to complete.

The expanded center will add approximately 25 jobs, which January acknowledged may be challenging to fill.

"Staffing is always an issue and since Covid has been exacerbated a bit," she said. "As much as we would like to be at full capacity and fully operating the day the new facility opens, we know that that's probably not realistic, and so we will open spaces as we're able to hire the staff to do so with the main focus being in our infant-toddler classrooms."

Middlebury College helped start Otter Creek in 1984 and the College Street Children's Center in 2001 after it created the Middlebury Early Care and Education Consortium in 2000, an agreement between the college, United Way of Addison County, Addison County Child Care Services, Bristol Family Center, Mary Johnson Children's Center and Otter Creek. Although this agreement expired in 2017, the college has continued to support these centers financially on an annual basis, according to Sue Ritter, director of community relations at the college.

"It's important to note that the original consortium agreement was not intended to be a long-term solution, especially given the need for expansion," Ritter wrote in an email to The Campus, citing Otter Creek's expansion project as a more efficient solution to the childcare crisis than the now-expired agreement. The childcare crisis, in concurrence with the ongoing housing crisis, curbs the college's ability to recruit and maintain college faculty and staff and has a similarly negative impact on local businesses.

In addition to grant funding, the college also donated the land adjacent to Otter Creek into which the facility will expand. It will also provide a temporary space on the college's property for the childcare center to operate in during the construction period. This location is currently undetermined but will be finalized and announced in the coming months.

As a part of Otter Creek's partnership with the college, 60% of its enrollment must be children of families with a parent working for the college. At Otter Creek, the Mary Johnson Children's Center and Bristol Family Center, families with at least one parent working for the college are given priority on the waitlists — this does not guarantee them childcare, but increases their likelihood of being granted a spot. Each of these centers enroll at least two children whose parents work at the college, according to January.

Even with this advantage, Adi Livny, an Israel Institute Teaching Fellow at the college, still faced challenges in finding convenient childcare for her three-year-old son when they moved to Vermont two years ago. Warned in advance about the difficulties of finding childcare, Livny not only registered for a waitlist that could land her a spot at several childcare centers months in advance, but also called each of the local centers individually to inquire about their availability.

"Part of the problem is that you don't know if you have a spot until late in the process and that if you're new in town, you have less resources and connections in the community, and then it's pretty complicated to get daycare," Livny said.

For her first year working at Middlebury, Livny successfully secured a spot for her son at the Bristol Family Center, a 20-minute drive from her Middlebury faculty housing. After a year of driving her son this distance to Bristol for childcare every morning, she was offered spots at Mary Johnson and at the Bridge School, both centers located in Middlebury. She took the spot at Mary Johnson, which she believes she was given because her son had turned three, entering an age group with more care available than that for younger children.

"If you teach here at the college [faculty housing] is very convenient and is supposedly a very local lifestyle — you can walk to work, that's the advantage of having faculty housing, but if you don't have childcare in town, it changes these ideals of living in a college town," Livny said.

Red Clover and Otter Creek's upcoming development projects are an attempt to uphold those ideals, making childcare more accessible for Middlebury locals.

SKIING, READING AND MARVELING: HOW MIDDLEBURY STAFF SPEND THE WINTER

By CHARLIE FISCH
Staff Writer

As the days grow colder and the daylight hours shorten, everyone must find winter-friendly ways to spend their time. From hitting the snow to ski or snowshoe to indoor options such as knitting or reading by the fire, Middlebury College staff have a whole host of activities in their winter routine.

Many students are attracted to the college because of its unique access to the outdoors, and some even remain in the area after graduation, continuing to participate in activities they came to love as students. Mikaela Taylor '15.5, the Special Collections Public Services and Outreach Specialist at the Davis Family Library, is one of these Middlebury graduates that chose to stick around.

Taylor did not, however, grow up participating in the winter activities popular at the college. A Houston, Texas native, Taylor did not experience snow until becoming a Middlebury student. Now, after 12 years of living in Vermont, her favorite winter activities are downhill and nordic skiing.

According to Taylor, it took until after she graduated to fully realize her love for skiing."The first time I tried skiing during orientation, I ran into a tree on my first time down the hill, and that kind of scared me off for a while," she told The Campus.

However, she mustered up the courage to try again for the Ski Down during her graduation, and it has since become one of her favorite winter activities. She enjoys skiing at the Middlebury College Snow Bowl, which she described as a wonderful community resource.

Taylor's introduction to cross-country skiing on the other hand began with a rather calmer J-Term physical education class at the Rikert Nordic Center. While she loves to ski at Rikert, Taylor said she also enjoys skiing at the Ralph Myhre Golf Course when there is enough snow for its convenient proximity to the college.

Taylor's favorite part of cross-country skiing is the peacefulness and beauty of nature. It is not only good exercise, but also a meditative activity that she said mirrors the enjoyment she gets out of hiking.

"Even at Rikert, having been there many times, I still feel like I get to explore different areas and see new things," Taylor added. "That's where I really learned to embrace winter."

The next winter activity on her bucket list is snowshoeing, which Taylor hopes to try with a friend soon. While Taylor enjoys being outside to appreciate the bountiful Vermont snow, she also finds reading and watching movies to be particularly enjoyable during the winter months.

For other staff members, spending time outdoors during the winter is less appealing.

Kathy Swan, a checker at Proctor Dining Hall, would rather be by a warm fireplace than outside in the snow during the winter. Swan grew up in Salisbury, Vt., and says that as a child, she often played outside in the snow. Living on a mountain as a kid, she was outdoors every day sledding, building snowmen and snow forts, and throwing snowballs. At the time, Swan explained, these activities were her main source of entertainment, as she did not have television service and had to turn to the outdoors to pass the time.

While she has hopes of trying downhill skiing as an adult, Swan said the frigid cold weather and possibility of injury deter her, so she sticks to the comfort of the indoors. She attributes her change of heart about the winter to the rise in technology.

"A lot of it, I believe, is cellphones, Game Boys, TV, we didn't have that much when we were younger," Swan told The Campus.

In the winter, Swan loves to read, play games and do puzzles. When her son was young, Swan maintained winter traditions from her childhood, but those memories have faded now that her son has moved out.

"We used to make homemade maple syrup and put it over snow. That was one that we did even as a kid," she said.

When Phyllis Stinson, program manager for conflict transformation abroad, moved to Middlebury in 2022, she was told she would have to find a winter sport.

"I asked genuinely if marveling at the beautiful winter snow through my window could be counted," she told The Campus.

Lucky for her, friends who hated the cold as much as she did told her that would be just fine, and she now finds peace in gazing at the snow.

"It's beautiful. The snow is beautiful, you can't deny that. The trees and the mountains and everything is gorgeous. I just don't really like the cold," she said.

But Stinson described herself as an active person, and after being given a pair of snowshoes, she tried them out on the college golf course.

"Once you get moving, it's good," she said. "It's just the initial getting up and out into the cold."

Stinson plans to snowshoe again this winter, and even try her feet at a friend's pair of cross-country skis this coming weekend.

For the most part, Stinson's strategy is to surround herself with people who do like winter in hopes it rubs off on her.

"It's kind of infectious," she said. "If you maybe aren't a winter person, it makes you appreciate it more."

Stinson's husband and children love to ski, and she especially enjoys the value of the Snow Bowl, where her son is part of the Middlebury Ski Club.

"The Snow Bowl is great," she said. "It's an amazing resource for everybody: the community, the college, it's like a community pool in other places. I don't go and use it, but I'm really happy it's there for all the people I love."

If Swan's discovery of alpine and nordic skiing, Taylor's love for cozying up indoors and Stinson's experiments with snowshoeing are any indication, it is never too late for people to try new winter activities.

Editor's Note: Managing Editor Katie Futterman '24 contributed reporting.

COURTESY PHOTO/MIKAELA TAYLOR
Mikaela Taylor '15.5, who works in Special Collections, grew up in Houston, Texas, but since moving to Vermont has picked up cross-country skiing among other winter activities.

SARAH SAYS: WHO'S AFRAID OF SSRIS?

Op-Ed

Sarah Miller *is a member of the class of 2024 and an Editor At-Large for The Campus.*

I was surprised how easy it was to get a prescription for Prozac.

My consultation with the doctor, though a sleep-deprived, teary blur, could not have been more than thirty minutes. She told me I would probably have the medicine by the evening; the script was that common.

That evening, picking up the prescription from the CVS counter, had the ring of an anti-climax. I resisted treating my anxiety with medication for so long, but when the crisis point came, the decision to take Prozac was easy. My anxiety was just another problem in need of solving.

It won't surprise anyone to hear that America is embroiled in a mental health crisis. In the years before Covid-19 hit, the rates of Americans reporting depression and anxiety were already on the rise, and with the onset of the pandemic, they skyrocketed. The New Yorker introduced an issue this past summer devoted to therapy by claiming "if our current moment has a defining impulse, it's the drive to feel good again."

Young women have been hit especially hard. The Youth Risk Behavior Survey, published by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), found the number of girls experiencing "persistent feelings of sadness and hopelessness" increased from 36% to 57% between 2011 and 2021, with the highest jump occurring during the pandemic. The survey shows that within this same period, the number of girls who have seriously considered suicide increased by 11%.

As a result, more Americans are on antidepressants known as selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) than ever before. As of the spring of 2022, just under a quarter of Americans between 18–29 were on medication for mental health. Writing for the New York Times, columnist Maureen Dowd mourned "campuses awash in S.S.R.I.s... young women who seem to have everything, yet they are unable to fully enjoy a stretch of their life that should be sizzling with adventure and promise."

Since their debut, SSRIs have been a locus of concern. Many of the peers and adults in my life express their great wariness toward the drugs. They don't want to use a drug that might make them a "zombie" and alter their brain chemistry. This alleged sanctity of the brain strikes me as slightly misguided. After all, these are the same people who binge drink regularly or incessantly use their phone — both activities that are proven to deteriorate brain activity. Many of my friends on SSRIs, some of the most intelligent women I know, carry a deep shame from the stigma of what they fear is a life-long dependency.

I don't mean to come across as sanctimonious. I understand their wariness.

Until about six months ago, I shared it.

Early in my semester abroad last spring, I was violently mugged. The study abroad program recommended I see a therapist, and though I agreed that made sense, I ducked the calls and emails from my program coordinator until they went away. For the first time in a long time I was not seeing a therapist, and I had the sense that if I talked about what had happened to me then my composure (which alone in a foreign country was as good as a survival instinct) would break. So, I did the unhealthy thing; I repressed my feelings. I went out drinking, went to class, toured foreign countries and got commended for my strength.

For most of us, repression comes with a built-in expiration date. Eventually what we bury floats back to the surface; it's basic physics.

Soon after I returned home to the United States, I began to see danger everywhere. Each bump of turbulence portended a plane crash, I watched my back while I walked and in my bed at home, I lay rigid with the fear that someone might break in. I started to experience panic attacks, but I didn't realize that until much later — the lightheadedness, the feeling that I was breathing through a straw, was quite unlike what I saw on TV. I was so afraid of the pain in my chest and the tingling in my legs that I saw a doctor, and even though I was almost certain it was anxiety, it took an E.K.G. to relax ("perfect," by the way) and it only lasted a moment.

My body was in crisis, but only when it became clear that there was no other recourse did I begin to seek the proper treatment. I would never be so negligent with any other health issue or any other medication. Why did I fight so hard against helping my mind, which is just another one of my body's organs?

I blame the rhetoric of the true self. Much of the opposition to SSRI is grounded in a fear that we are at risk of diluting ourselves on medication. People worry who they will be if they stay on SSRIs forever. Among artists, there is an unfortunate tradition of lionizing mental illness. Taking medication I had done just fine without seemed to be an unnecessary risk to my creativity.

Even the pro-SSRI rhetoric is grounded in the true self. From the endless scroll of my Instagram feed, Kristen Bell, an ambassador for the mental health platform Hers, asks me with a beautiful smile, "what if [medication] made us feel more like ourselves?"

Though my mugging triggered an escalation of my anxiety, my history with anxiety far predates the crime. Even before I could name it, anxiety has always been with me.

It can be exhausting to feel so overmastered by my thoughts, to always fear the worst-case scenario. But anxiety has shaped me in other ways, for better and sometimes worse. I'm highly sensitive, a considerate friend, more disciplined than almost anyone I know and the same relentless, analytical thinking patterns that lead me down internal rabbit holes are also what make me an able student. So, what does it mean to treat the enemy that holds you in its grips if the hold is sometimes an embrace?

I've come to think one of our main problems with SSRIs is a collective overestimation of their abilities. This fall, after over three months on SSRIs, I had an anxiety flare-up. At first, I was affronted. Wasn't I supposed to be finished with anxiety? But, as anyone on a SSRI knows, they are not designed to eliminate anxiety. Nothing can. Prozac is just one piece of a multifaceted treatment plan.

Every morning, I take a slim white capsule. My other daily routine is by far more grueling: I've committed to meditating at least once a day. I came to meditating not just kicking and screaming, but years late. I can do an untold number of things to procrastinate meditating. Suddenly, deep-cleaning my sink becomes desperately appealing.

But eventually the time comes to sit alone with my thoughts. One of my favorite meditations is designed specifically for anxiety. I am told, by the pre-recorded voice I have come to know so well, to imagine myself as sitting by a gently flowing stream with leaves floating on the surface. As the thoughts run through my head — good, bad or neutral — I place them on leaves and watch as they float away.

Slowly, each day, I teach myself to breathe again.

VERMONT: THE GREEN(WASHING) MOUNTAIN STATE

Op-Ed

Duncan Kreps *is a member of the class of 2024.*

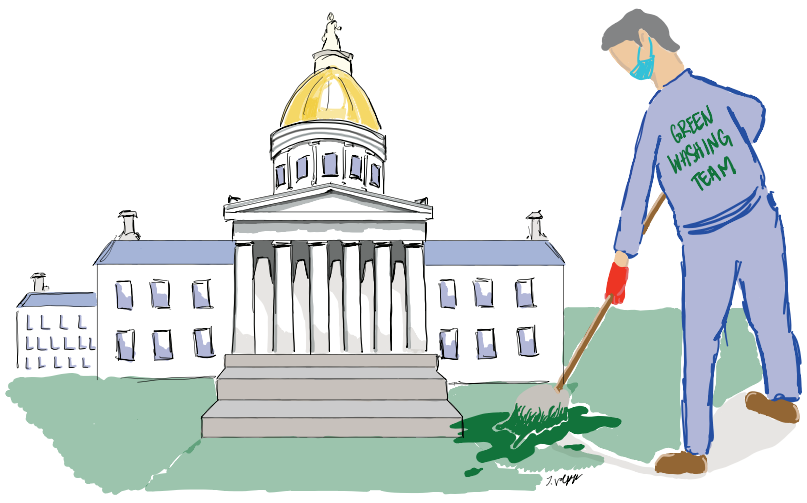
Vermont isn't what we think it is. At least, Vermont isn't the place I thought it was or the place many of my peers think it to be. Coming to Vermont as a student from the Midwest, I was eager to become immersed in the land of politicians like Bernie Sanders, activist companies like Ben and Jerry's and values of environmentalism and justice. These, along with maple syrup, mountains and cows, are the basic traits of the Vermont stereotype and likely are some of the things that drew many students to Middlebury. In fact, a key pillar of the admissions info session I attended back in the summer of 2019 was that a prospective student could not understand the college without understanding the context of the wonderful state in which it exists.

Yet, as I make my way through my fourth and final year at this school, armed with perspectives and facts gained from a host of experiences inside the classroom and outside working with community organizations, I feel it is time to challenge this prevalent Vermont narrative and call attention to a set of realities that exist here. In doing so I seek not to bash the wonderful people of this state or outright vilify its systems - I do really love it here - but I hope to present a side of Vermont that, though troubling, is ripe for the type of change being advocated for by many grassroots organizations locally. I also write as a call to action for Middlebury students, who, though often unaware of these truths, hold great power in advocating for change in local and national politics. A rally on January 27th in Montpellier, organized in collaboration between climate action organization 350Vermont and seventeen other local organizations, presents an opportunity for students to educate themselves on such injustices and take a stand to advocate for a better future in Vermont.

Perhaps the most common misconception about Vermont relates to its status as an environmental and climate leader. The Green Mountain State is in fact the third highest per capita emitter of greenhouse gas emissions in the Northeast, and much of its climate policy is far behind its New England neighbors. This is a result in part of policy like the Renewable Energy Standard, a piece of legislation passed in 2017 that sought to incentivize a shift toward renewable energy in the electricity sector but resulted in the greenwashing of electricity generation and hampered wind and solar development.

The law requires that 75% of utilities' electricity must come from renewable sources by the year 2032, which at first glance seems impactful and supports the Vermont environmentalism narrative. However, the specifications regarding what sources are allowed to count toward this 75% are where the legislation breaks down. Electricity from large hydroelectric generation, an emitter of large amounts of methane gas and a historic justification for the unjust flooding of large swaths of forest (often disproportionately affecting indigenous people) is allowed to count toward this total. Vermont is the only New England state that allows large hydro to be counted in this way. The Renewable Energy Standard also allows for the procurement of unbundled renewable energy credits, which permits utilities to purchase the renewable trait from generation projects that might take place far outside of the state. The legislation has in fact led to a decrease in solar development in Vermont since its passage in 2017. Of the 65% of the Vermont energy mix that is classified as renewable today, 90% comes from Renewable Energy Credits and large hydro. This is the truth behind the guise of impactful policy.

Policies like the Renewable Energy Standard are indicative of a broader issue in which the Vermont of today exists in contrast to the Vermont many people think it to be.



This policy paradigm exists as well in a broader context of the affordable housing crisis, overwhelmed food shelves in the state and low-income families spending over 5 times more of their monthly income on energy bills than higher-income families. At a time when disastrous weather events continue to rock Vermont and increasing temperatures are consistently shattering monthly heat records, it feels like we have sharply departed from that idealized Vermont narrative.

Today, I see a balance of power in Vermont that puts politicians on the side of utilities and corporations and win opposition to the interests of the people who individually are powerless against the machine of money and politics. Now in Vermont, as is the case across the country, distraught citizens are becoming aware of this lopsided system at the same time as they are becoming aware of their power in numbers. Where previously divided, movements built on issues like climate, racial justice and economic reform are now rallying around their intersections and collectively demanding solutions to the shared root causes of injustice. In Vermont, climate justice organizations like 350Vermont are collaborating with groups like Migrant Justice, the Poor People's Campaign, the VT Anti-War Coalition, Voices for Vermont's Children and many others to demand government action to address the root causes of injustice and ensure a brighter future for all.

On Jan. 27 this broader movement will show itself at the Vermont statehouse at the Vermonters Together: Building a Better Future March and Rally. The rally in Montpelier, Vt., a collaboration of eighteen local organizations including Middlebury's Sunday Night Environmental Group, aims to call attention to the intersections of the respective movements represented and unite Vermonters to demand that legislators address the root causes of injustice in the state. Demands range from specific legislation like a stronger Renewable Energy Standard to broader asks like ensured investment in communities and support for farmers. A diverse lineup of speakers will offer an overview of the issues at hand and lay out a vision for how Vermont can be the state its people deserve.

So, what about Middlebury students? Middlebury students, most of whom come from out of state, are afforded the opportunity to live on a campus that itself perpetuates the idealized Vermont narrative: Local chwocolate milk in the dining hall, carbon-neutral branding across campus and a shuttle to our own ski hill all curate the "authentic" Vermont experience. At the same time, Middlebury students are immersed in conversations of systemic injustice, broken policies and rampant inequality across the globe. Many students feel called to use their education to dedicate some piece of their future career to making a positive impact. But in doing so, we fail to look at the present, at the local community in which we are so lucky to live and at the injustices that exist right here.

The voices of students matter. Students are seen as the future and historically, when students rally around a collective message in the face of injustice, positive change happens. And this era will be no different. Every politician, CEO, or person in power has a young person in their life, be they a child, grandchild, family member or friend, and therefore has some stake in the future they will leave behind for them. The rally represents an opportunity to look beyond the Vermont narrative, educate ourselves on the very real injustices in Vermont, and utilize our platform as students to advocate for a better future for all. In doing so, maybe we can push Vermont a little closer to that land of justice, clean air, mountains, and maple syrup. See the rally flyers around campus for more details and carpool info. I hope to see you there.

How many colleges can say they have their own music video — better yet, two?

SUSANNA SCHATZ

Editorial

The editorial represents the opinion of the Middlebury Campus Editorial Board.

Middlebury's first student-created anthem came in 2010, when Charlie Taft '11, of The Allen Jokers — a Middlebury-founded music group — released the Midd Kid music video, which received a whopping 1.7 million views on YouTube. The Windward Entertainment team created original music, wrote original lyrics and filmed a video featuring Middlebury parties, college boys in sunglasses and the Davis Family Library. This past fall, wishing to recreate the 2010 video "to reflect the Middlebury [they'd] come to know and love," directors and editors Jordan Saint-Louis '24.5 and Malick Thiam '24 spent their fall semester behind a video camera, filming a video for a new Middlebury-themed song, which was produced by Professor of the Practice McLean Macionis and written by a collection of friends and lyricists.

Separated by 13 years, the two videos have some major cinematographic and lyric differences resulting largely from the different times in which they were created. Despite this, both videos show the undying passion and school spirit of Middlebury students.

The production levels of the two videos are evidence of the times in which they were created. Midd Kid features blurry clips, a dark color scheme and a photographic vignette characteristic of its time period. Such a project was perhaps seen as more revolutionary and impressive than it might be in the current age of TikTok and Instagram Reels. Midd Kid 2.0 features more sophisticated videography, brighter colors, shorter clips and overall more visual content than the original video.

While the original video was more of a satirical take, poking fun at many negative stereotypes of Middlebury, the second was far more celebratory in nature. Midd Kid 2.0 begins with a prospective student opening his admission decision after receiving a text from The Allen Jokers — a reference to the 2010 video — saying, "Check your email Middlebury decisions just came out!" The music stops halfway through the video for the quip, "I think Middlebury applications are gonna skyrocket after this." Later in the video comes a scene of Thiam and Saint-Louis at President Laurie Patton's house, where Patton asks the two, "How is the new Midd Kid video going?"

A key aim of the second Midd Kid rendition was to create a video with more diversity. The first video faced backlash for a very white cast that focused on the stereotypically white experiences of lax bro party culture at Middlebury. The second video centers BIPOC students as lead singers and a diverse group background cast, and includes a scene at a Pan-African, Latinx, Asian, and Native-American + (PALANA) basement party. One focus of the video, however, is still on scenes of skiing and outdoors culture at Middlebury, which are known for being predominantly white experiences.

There were many opportunities for students to participate in Midd Kid 2.0. The MiddKid 2.0 team advertised the events on social media, and turnout was high — even for a Friday morning sunrise Snow Bowl hike and film-shoot. The video credits about 100 "100 % certified Midd Kids" who participated in the filming process, and there were over 300 people at the debut film screening in McCullough.

Middlebury's flavor of school spirit is unique. We don't always have the highest turnout at sporting events; the attendants are comprised mostly of athletes or friends of athletes. However, the fact that a significant portion of the student body was involved in the newest video in one way or another speaks to the fact that students are proud to go to Middlebury and eager to show off its unique nature.

Of course, the video portrays the life of the extroverted, outdoors-oriented, party student. Another significant portion of the student body does not ski and spends their weekend nights doing schoolwork. Even if you don't see yourself in the video, literally or metaphorically, Midd Kid 2.0 features places and references that we all know. If someone were to ask you what Middlebury is like, showing them this video would do a pretty good job of answering that question.

With three student deaths this year and the beginning of the Israel-Gaza war — fall 2023 was in many ways a sad and divisive term. While there often aren't events on campus that manifest Middlebury students' school spirit, the outpouring of enthusiasm for the Midd Kid 2.0 video shows the pride Midd Kids feel for their school.

What is more, as members of the class of 2024, Saint-Louis and Thiam entered Middlebury during the pandemic at a time when Middlebury life was boring and bleak. We are glad that the class of 2024 came to experience the bright and active Middlebury that was represented in this video and was inspired enough to create a video showcasing it. Perhaps in another 14 years, the class of 2038 will show us their take on the Middlebury experience.

Orientation Leaders are underpaid – let's refuse the role until wages improve

Op-Ed

***Maisha Nubah** is a member of the class of 2026.*

Reflecting on my experiences as an Orientation Assistant for the new first-year Febs in 2022, a job I originally deemed invigorating and fun, I realized that I will never do it again. I am not alone in this sentiment; my friends who worked as orientation leaders share similar feelings. Like me, they have opted not to apply as orientation leaders again due to the substandard pay they received weeks after they finished their jobs. In 2022, the college decided to pay students a one-time payment of $300 for eight hours of daily training during their training period and once students arrived, leaders usually worked more than five hours per day. A 2022 article in The Middlebury Campus revealed that leaders are paid less than $4 per hour, which is unacceptably low for the work they do.

If we want Middlebury to increase the pay stipend, we have to advocate for it directly from the college, as it seems unlikely to happen organically. It is crucial to emphasize that being an orientation leader is a significant and essential role, one that only Middlebury students can fulfill due to our unique connection to the college and experiences as students. With this in mind, if you have already applied, I ask that you reconsider your decision and decline the position. Creating change requires unity, and our strength lies in the collective action we can only perform together. By encouraging fellow students to not apply and spreading awareness about the stipend issue, we can send a powerful message to the college administration.

This is a plea for the college to review and hopefully raise the stipend for orientation leaders, recognizing their crucial role. Together, we must push for fair compensation that accurately reflects orientation leaders' dedication to their positions. Leaders go above and beyond, and the current pay doesn't match their commitment. It's time for the college to acknowledge and rectify this by fairly compensating our leaders. Let us work together to make sure we get an increased stipend for all orientation leaders.

I applied to be an orientation assistant because I wanted to be a supportive presence for new students and help them feel welcome during what can be an intimidating transition to college life. During my first semester, I experienced the social pressure that comes with trying to quickly make friends, and I wanted to ease it for others. Connecting with and assisting new students was my way of contributing to a positive start for them in the college experience.

Slightly different from the responsibilities of orientation leaders, my responsibilities as an Orientation Assistant included assembling around 100 goodie bags to give to incoming Febs during class registration, providing support to orientation leaders in organizing materials for group activities and running various errands. Orientation leaders are responsible for facilitating a smooth transition for new students. They engage in regular meetings, where students are introduced to each other, play group games, and share thoughts and feelings. These activities aim to promote connections among the incoming class and integrate them into the Middlebury community. Additionally, orientation leaders conduct one-on-one meetings to address individual concerns about class registration, orientation activities and other matters. Because I worked with orientation leaders on organizing activities for students, I gained insights into the effort and dedication they put in each day.

While I found certain aspects of my role as an orientation assistant rewarding, other aspects left me dumbfounded at how the college compensates students in these positions.

I was pleased to receive a compensation of $13.58 per hour, commensurate with the wage associated with a Skilled B-level worker. This compensation felt fair and reflective of the workload I undertook. However, when discussing compensation with orientation leaders, I was surprised to learn that they earned less despite putting in the same, if not more, hours than I had. Leaders work tirelessly to ensure a positive experience for incoming students. Offering orientation leaders a stipend of $300 for their duration of work seems disproportionately low, and it's a sentiment shared by many in the role.

The compensation for the amount of work orientation leaders put in is notably low. I have three friends who worked as orientation leaders last semester, and each of them expressed concerns about both the workload and the pay they received. All my friends found the training period to be excessively long, involving extended sessions of up to three hours at a time. The general consensus among them and others is that the compensation doesn't align with the demanding nature of their job.

Upon hearing widespread dissatisfaction with the stipend for orientation leaders, we took the initiative to create a petition advocating for an increase. While our initial demand sought a considerably higher wage, we adjusted our proposal after consulting several orientation leaders. They expressed that a $500 stipend would be more reasonable and reflective of the efforts they invest in their roles. Consequently, we launched a petition urging the school to raise the stipend accordingly for future leaders. It garnered support from 60 out of 98 fall 2023 orientation leaders. In addition to circulating the petition, I forwarded it to one of the higher-ups of the orientation team to show them the student leaders' widespread support for this petition.

I also had the opportunity to meet with a member of the Office of the First Year Experience and I appreciate their openness to hearing and discussing our pay concerns. However, despite the positive dialogue, I was informed by the administrator that the likelihood of a stipend increase is low, which was initially disheartening. Nevertheless, I understood that advocating for a pay raise would be no easy task.

It is worth noting that Middlebury College boasts significant financial resources, with an endowment exceeding a billion dollars and ongoing fundraising efforts. The call for a higher stipend is rooted in the belief that the hard work of the students holding these positions merits a modest increase. Raising the stipend extends beyond monetary value; it symbolizes the school's respect for and acknowledgment of the dedication and effort orientation leaders contribute. Increasing the stipend for orientation leaders doesn't just benefit them; it also benefits new students. A higher stipend is likely to create greater enthusiasm and engagement among leaders, leading to improved interactions with students. This, in turn, enhances the overall experience for new students who are more likely to receive increased attention and support from their leaders. If the school genuinely prioritizes the well-being and smooth transition of new students into college life, it should consider raising the stipend.

Orientation leaders deserve better pay, and the school needs to acknowledge and reward their efforts appropriately. I urge you to join us in pushing for higher wages for these dedicated individuals who undoubtedly deserve fair compensation.

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MID(D)WINTER MOVIE RECS

By CHARLIE KEOHANE
Editor at Large

Time off from school and proximity to multiple Cinemark theaters meant I got to catch up on some of the latest movie releases over winter break. From a sultry English summer story in "Saltburn" to two very different takes on a New England winter, I'm recapping three new films.

"Saltburn"

It's 2006 at Oxford University, and scholarship student Oliver Quick (Barry Keoghan) is on the fringe of the social scene until a seemingly chance encounter leads his wealthy classmate Felix Catton (Jacob Elordi) to invite Oliver to spend the summer at his family's ancestral Saltburn Manor. Oliver can't refuse the offer, a decision that propels him into a more glamorous social circle. The guest becomes obsessed with Felix and his family: his mother, Elsbeth (Rosamund Pike); father, James (Richard Grant); sister Venetia (Alison Oliver) and cousin Farleigh (Archie Madekwe). As Oliver tries to keep up with the Cattons' luxurious lifestyle, strange happenings unfold at the estate.

"Saltburn" is an exciting and fresh sophomore film from writer/director Emerald Fennell. Like her debut film, "Promising Young Woman," "Saltburn" is brimming with twists and style, anchored by a strong cast and a killer soundtrack. While some of the characters were a little thinly written, Keoghan brings his all to the screen (even though he seems a little too old for the role), and Elordi is electric. The montage of the pair smoking cigarettes around Oxford at twilight is cinematic and beautifully done. Pike steals the show with some of the funniest lines.

With unlikeable characters and some daring plot choices, I'd recommend skipping "Saltburn" if you are easily grossed out or offended. Even if it stumbles as a satire, the mix of black comedy and psychological drama makes the film an entertaining treat for audiences.

"Eileen"

Based on Ottessa Moshfegh's 2015 debut novel, "Eileen" follows a 24-year-old woman named Eileen (Thomasin McKenzie) working as a secretary at a boys' juvenile correction facility in Massachusetts in the winter of 1964. The young woman leads a lonely, repressed and isolated life — her mother is dead, her older sister has moved away and her dad is an emotionally abusive man with a drinking problem. Eileen's dreary daily routine is abruptly interrupted when a new psychologist, Rebecca (Anne Hathaway), arrives at the prison and begins looking into a recent murder. The two begin a twisted relationship, uncovering dark secrets about their community and each other.

The grainy opening credits of "Eileen" immediately set the scene for a dark, thrilling period piece. "Eileen" isn't the easiest watch — I was left in unsettling suspense as the film crept towards the climax. While it succeeds in creating a grim, cold atmosphere, and McKenzie and Hathaway are well-matched, the plot leaves too much under the surface to be satisfying. The disturbing storyline boils steady and slow until the last few scenes, where it quickly spins out of control. All things considered, "Eileen" is creepy and cinematic fare, even if it's not particularly memorable.

"The Holdovers"

The premise of "The Holdovers" is straightforward: a group of adolescent boys unable to go home for the holidays need to "hold over" winter break at their New England boarding school, the fictional Barton Academy, until the new year. Curmudgeonly ancient civilizations teacher Paul Hunham (Paul Giamatti) is in charge of the motley crew, led by Angus Tully (newcomer Dominic Sessa), a moody smart-alec with a troubled home life.

Barton's head chef, Mary Lamb, is played by Da'Vine Joy Randolph, who just won a Golden Globe last week for Best Supporting Actress in this role. Lamb, too, is holding over while she grieves the loss of her son, who died in the Vietnam War. Unfolding over a couple of wintery weeks in 1970, Paul, Mary and Angus form an unlikely connection, revealing more about their complicated pasts and future aspirations.

I haven't heard many people talk about this film, but it was definitely my favorite new release. "The Holdovers" has a cozy throwback feel — a little bit like "The Breakfast Club" or "Dead Poets Society." While the plot takes some unexpected turns, at its core, the film is a heartwarming story of self-discovery and intergenerational connection. You can't help but root for its protagonists.

The pacing and plot structure are unusual; the narrative is set up with a mischievous group dynamic before abruptly switching to that of a road trip film, which felt a bit jarring. But pushing that aside, the film offers a hilarious journey with three touching performances. Perhaps especially appealing to Middlebury students are the snowy shots of Barton (filmed at Deerfield Academy in western Massachusetts), many of which resemble our own wintery campus. And while it missed capturing the fraught nature of the early '70s, I found "The Holdovers" to be the winning combination of fresh and familiar.

These movies may be leaving theaters, but they are available now on streaming platforms. Happy watching!

Reel Critic: "Like a Fish on the Moon"

By YUVRAJ SHAH
Opinions Editor

COURTESY PHOTO

The Hirschfield International Film Series returned to campus last fall after a one year hiatus.

Do children learn from their parents, or do parents learn from their children?

"Like a Fish on the Moon," the fourth installment of the 2023–24 Hirschfield International Film Series, examines this question by carrying the viewer through the life of an Iranian couple and their selectively-mute child. The film series returned to Middlebury this past October after over a year-long hiatus since May 2022.

The 2022 film was directed by Iranian filmmaker Dornaz Hajiha, who was in attendance at the Jan. 11 screening. Hajiha conducted a Q&A after the screening, allowing the audience to further develop their understanding about her project. It follows parents Haleh (Sepidar Tari) and Amir (Ali Ahmadi), along with their four-year-old son, Ilya, who has inexplicably stopped talking and responding to others.

The viewer is led directly into the life of the young family as their mundane daily routine becomes the primary ground for the film's conflict. The plot centers on Ilya's inability to speak and is developed by examining the effect of Ilya's mutism on his parents and their own relationship.

The opening scene takes place in a psychiatrist's office, as the doctor seeks to understand Ilya's relationship with his parents. The scene reveals that Ilya is closer to his mother and has become dependent on her for his daily routine. Interestingly, Hajiha deliberately chooses to not reveal the face of the psychiatrist throughout the entire film, forcing the viewer to feast on just the emotion of Haleh, Amir and their son.

As the family leaves the psychiatrist's office, the film sets up its primary conflict: Haleh being challenged by the psychiatrist to detach herself from Ilya and allow Amir to resume the duties she has been carrying out, including packing Ilya's school bag to cooking his dinner, all in an attempt to forestall the child's mutism. The film leads us to believe that Haleh's heavy involvement in her son's life may have led to his mutism, and as she detaches herself, Ilya may speak again. In an effort to provide the viewer with insight into the relationship between Haleh and Amir, the film focuses on the ordinary parts of their daily routine, which begin to serve as battlegrounds for the duo's internal and external conflicts.

While the cast of "Like a Fish on the Moon" is purposefully and explicitly sparse, with only three significant characters, the film successfully dives deep into the feelings of Haleh and Amir without an overreliance on long dialogue. The vessel of the car is used to provide us with long and silent scenes as each parent contemplates Ilya's continued mutism. Hajiha makes use of camera angles to juxtapose the different reactions of the two parents toward Ilya's mutism. By placing Amir and Haleh next to each other in each scene, she is able to show Amir as being content with the approach described by the psychiatrist, namely Haleh's need to detach herself from her son's routine, as she becomes more desperate in her attempts to make her son talk again.

In a callback to the opening scenes of the film, the second act follows the relationship between Haleh and Amir as it deteriorates. Haleh's despair comes through as the scenes cycle through doctor visits, taking the viewer into a speech and play therapist's office. and a visually challenging scene of Ilya strapped down in a CT scanner. As Haleh's desperation for her son to speak increases, so too does the pace of the film.

Haleh's desperation spills into the cinematography as well, with Hajiha using more handheld camera angles as Ilya is driven around to various offices and appointments. Ilya's isolation becomes more deliberate and clear, as the child is more rarely seen in the same shot as his parents.

In the movie's final section, the feeling of urgency is stressed even more through the use of heavy and sudden orchestral music. Actions that might seem irrelevant to the plot, such as closing doors and flicking lights, are suddenly matched with intense orchestral music in a minor key, further immersing the viewer into Haleh's distressed mindset.

Interestingly, in these final scenes, as the mother's desperation reaches its peak, the film introduces Amir's sudden animosity towards his mute son. At the climax of the film, as Haleh suffers a psychotic break and begins to walk into the ocean, Amir abandons his apparent contentment towards Ilya in prior scenes and begins to scold his son. Countering the typical patriarchal narrative, "Like a Fish on the Moon" ends with Amir bearing as much anger and desperation as Haleh, pushing back against the common trope of anger and sadness being thrown only onto the mother.

In an almost comedic ending, the film concludes with the most noise yet, as both mother and father reach their breaking point regarding Ilya's silence. At this crucial juncture, the film makes use of dialogue, music and handheld camera angles to intensify on-screen sound, as the viewer is teased with Ilya seemingly preparing to speak. Yet, incredibly, Hajiha dramatically cuts this noise, as Ilya reverts to his usual silent self.

In a surprising direct contrast to the presented norm, the parent is shown to have learned from the child in this scene, as Ilya, Haleh and Amir all drive home from the beach in complete silence. Shockingly, the child has taught the parents to accept his mutism. In response to a viewer's question following the screening, Hajiha noted that she wishes the ending had even more isolation and silence.

Is silence just the absence of noise? Hajiha seems to think so. "Most of our questions in life are unresolved. For some things, there is no solution," she said in the Q&A session following the screening. The film leaves us with an unfinished ending, as the viewer is left to wonder at the fate of the family and how they will cope with silence not just externally, but internally, as well.

NICHE READS: NOVELS FOR HISTORY MAJORS

By SYLVIE SHURE
Staff Writer

If you struggle to find time to read for fun, this is the spot for you. Niche Reads recommends novels that relate to academic (or other) interests so you can explore a new book while still feeling productive. Check back each week for more cool books!

History majors often study the stories of entire civilizations or eras. Novels with such a wide scope certainly abound, but literature is also a great way to explore more personal or familial histories. The following books focus on understanding the past through individual narratives that study the ripples of history throughout ordinary lives.

"Moonglow" by Michael Chabon (2016)

Michael Chabon's "Moonglow" may be a novel, or it may be a memoir. It's kind of hard to keep track as the narrative unfolds, and Chabon seems to enjoy the ambiguity in the book's veracity. The plot follows Chabon, or perhaps a fictional version of him, or maybe both, as he learns about his dying grandfather's life. His grandfather, a gruff, unpredictable World War II veteran, also illuminates the lives of Chabon's mother and grandmother, and Chabon must contend with revelations that fundamentally challenge his image of his family.

This book is an exploration of the nature of truth and the importance of it. It asks the questions, does it matter what really happened in the past, or is it more important to know what we experienced? Should we venture to open the box in the attic? At once a portrait of a family tortured by secrets and of an entire generation scarred by war, "Moonglow" is a thrilling, shocking and beautiful read. Its humanity and humor are refreshing, and Chabon's gorgeous, light prose is always a joy to read.

You should read this book if you enjoy memoirs, if you are drawn to books with memorable characters or if you appreciate books with a witty voice.

"The Birds of Opulence" by Crystal Wilkinson (2016)

In Opulence, Ky., a small Black community, the women of the Goode-Browne family struggle with legacies of sexuality, reputation and madness. This sprawling, beautiful book follows generations of women and their quests to build lives with or without men among the echoes of their ancestors.

The strength of this book lies in its lush, poetic prose, which depicts in beautiful detail the fictional community of Opulence and the women at the center of the novel. The gender dynamics at play are heart-rending, and Wilkinson expertly exposes the cycles of violence — literal and figurative — that the Goode-Browne women face. While it spans multiple generations across many years, "The Birds of Opulence" is intimate and human, and its prose is not to be missed. Its explorations of family history, rooted in place, create an insightful view into the connections between past and present.

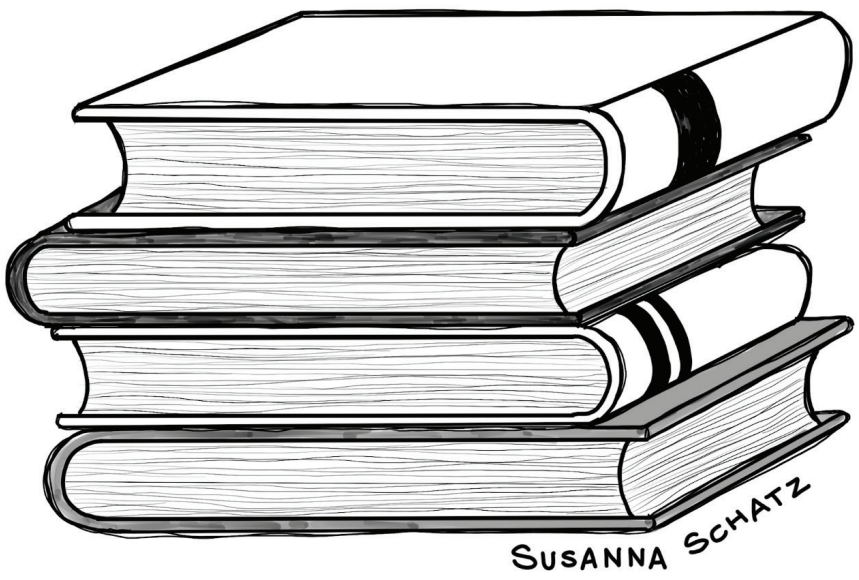
You should read this book if you're drawn to poetic language, if you like family sagas or if you're interested in novels that explore broader social issues.

"Slaughterhouse-Five" by Kurt Vonnegut (1969)

Of the books on this list, "Slaughterhouse-Five" is by far the most sprawling. It's the story of a World War II prisoner of war, Billy Pilgrim, who gets abducted by aliens. Luckily for Billy, he is abducted by the Tralfamadorians, an alien race that experiences time entirely differently from how humans do. ToTralfamadorians, time is as easy to move through as space, although all outcomes are predetermined. Eventually, the aliens give Billy the ability to treat time as they do.

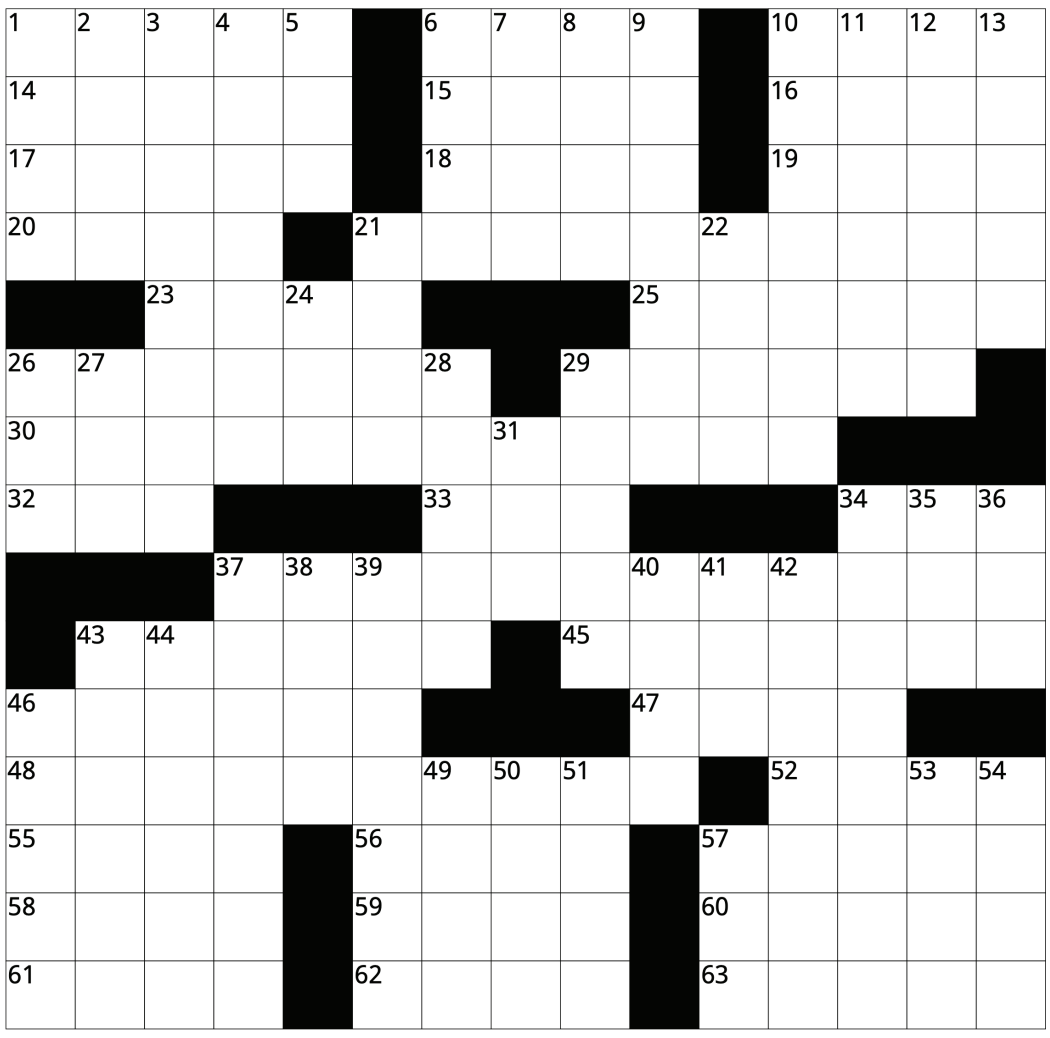
"Slaughterhouse-Five" interrogates the very concept of time and of history itself.. The novel explores what happens to a human with a non-human sense of time and the power to escape or relive any moment he pleases. Vonnegut, as always, is darkly funny and thought-provoking. "Slaughterhouse-Five" invites readers to question permanence and fate, and to examine the concept of detachment. It is a disturbing but enjoyable read, and those who have not cracked open this classic should definitely consider giving it a try.

You should read this book if you like science fiction elements, if you are interested in a high-concept story or if you appreciate humor in unlikely places.



Hitting the Slopes

Egan Turner



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44 Where you might find Curiosity or Perserverance
46 Archie Andrews' portrayer in "Riverdale"
49 "Wedding Crashers" actor Wilson
50 Soccer star Mia
51 Wall Street org.
53 One who just barely makes it
54 Online game that sounds like a burrowing invertebrate
57 Basketball legend Julius Erving's nickname

Radio Roundup: New Year, New Favorites

By WRMC EXEC BOARD

Social Media Manager's Pick – Matt Held '26
Album: "Space Heavy" by King Krule
Genre: Alternative, post-punk, jazz-rock
Recommended If You Like [RIYL]: Dean Blunt, Tanukichan, Mac DeMarco
Blurb: "Space Heavy" is an album to drown in. The album creates a woozy, oozy, weary and dreary atmosphere that you can get lost in. The deep reverb and heavy synths appear throughout, creating a uniquely King Krule sound. The melancholic theme of "Space Heavy" is reflected in both its sound and lyrics. The whole album is just so smooth and pleasant to the ear. I highly recommend it on a rainy night.

Concert Director's Pick – Addie Shandro '26
Album: "Blood" by Kelsey Lu
Genre: Electronic, classical, folk, alternative
RIYL: Sudan Archives, Jamila Woods, Caroline Polachek
Blurb: Kelsey Lu is magical, genre-less and transcendent. Their debut album, "Blood," is one of my few true no-skip albums and heavily features their dreamy vocals and insane cello skills. "Due West" has to be one of my favorite songs, and "Poor Fake" is a whirlwind love story viewed through the lens of art forgery — a masterful move in my opinion. "Blood" is best experienced while walking to a cafe during a tumultuous time in one's life, even more appropriate if you're going to read something along the lines of "The Bell Jar" while wearing over-ear headphones.

Treasurer's Pick – Jonah Landsman '24
Album: "Big Science" by Laurie Anderson
Genre: Art rock, electronic
RIYL: Imogen Heap, Lou Reed, Kronos Quartet
Blurb: I'm a sucker for any sci-fi-infused music, and Laurie Anderson's "Big Science" is pretty much the best you're going to get. Start with "From the Air" and "Let X=X." Then go back and listen all the way through. Do this while going on a walk and pretending to be a '70s NASA engineer.

General Manager's Pick – Natalie Penna '24
Album: "Magnolia Electric Co." by Songs: Ohia
Genre: Alt-country
RIYL: Bright Eyes, Wilco, Waxahatchee, Palace Music
Blurb: "The Magnolia Electric Co." turned 20 last March, putting it momentarily back in the spotlight for good reason — this album is fantastic. Jason Molina's lyricism is poetic and grim, achingly rather than punchily sad. The music itself is also somber and dark but still extremely listenable and well-produced. The album's country and rock influences never feel like they're fighting with each other. Though some tracks lean decidedly more towards country than others, everything feels cohesive and flows well without being same-y, which is a must (and also difficult!) for any album with multiple songs over five minutes in length. "The Magnolia Electric Co." is best listened to on a gray January day after 4:30 p.m. preferably when you're a little bit colder than you'd hoped to be.

Programming Manager's Pick – Grace Augspurger '25
Album: "She Wants Revenge" by She Wants Revenge
Genre: Goth rock
RIYL: Joy Division, Interpol, Hole
Blurb: Where Depeche Mode meets the Los Angeles rave scene, She Wants Revenge's debut album is by far their best. It is said to be inspired by Peter Murphy, but I think it's edgier than that. Featuring sexually charged lyrics with an intense electronic beat, this is music made by men about and for women.

Library Manager's Pick – Kyle Hooker '24
Album: "flounder" by quinnie
Genre: Indie pop/folk
RIYL: Leith Ross, Susannah Joffe
Blurb: I have been obsessively listening to "man," which was released as a single in 2022 and is part of this 2023 album. The song is a perfect ballad that attacks the archetype of the softboy womanizer. I love the juxtaposition of soft, dreamy vocals and abundant profanity.

Music Director's Pick – Honor McFadden '26
Album: "Sit Down for Dinner" by Blonde Redhead
Genre: Indie/alternative
RIYL: Melody's Echo Chamber, Broadcast
Blurb: A dreamy album. "Sit Down for Dinner" is a treat to listen to with a lot of variety and particularly cool instrumentals. Lead vocalist Kazu Makino brings a unique sound to the album and creates a soft atmosphere to enjoy. The transition from "Sit Down for Dinner, Pt. 1" to "Pt. 2" is a must-listen, and "Kiss Her Kiss Her" is an all-time favorite of mine.

Creative Director/Concert Manager's Pick – Neel Shah '26
Album: "Ways of Knowing" by Navy Blue
Genre: Rap
RIYL: MIKE, Earl Sweatshirt, being told it's gonna be ok
Blurb: Incredibly clear-eyed, assured and confident raps from Navy Blue combined with truly inspired and unique production make "Ways of Knowing" my favorite album of last year. What I love about this album is the perspective that Navy Blue brings. The way he communicates his experiences is that of a wise older brother, and to me, the album is all about rolling with the punches and learning to move forward to find joy. The four-song run from "To Fall in Love" to "Kill Switch" is something I have consistently gone back to almost weekly since the album came out — it never gets old for me. It is an album that has been both a rock for me during tougher times and a perfect soundtrack to better ones, and I would recommend it to everyone.

REEL CRITIC: "FERRARI"

By JACK TORPEY
Arts & Culture Editor

Racing movies typically make for a fun time at the theater. Think "Rush," Ron Howard's moving 2013 Formula One drama starring Chris Hemsworth and Daniel Brühl, or "Ford v Ferrari," the energetic 2019 blockbuster from James Mangold led by Matt Damon and Christian Bale. Those films follow sympathetic characters through affecting passages of drama off the racetrack that are interspersed with thrilling sequences of action on it. They are crowd-pleasers, and very good ones at that.

"Ferrari," the new biopic about auto legend Enzo Ferrari by veteran director Michael Mann, is not that type of racing movie, however. Working from the late Troy Kennedy Martin's somber screenplay, Mann — whose credits include "Heat" and "The Last of the Mohicans" — reinterprets the genre to present not a rousing spectacle of struggle and victory, but rather a solemn reflection on a powerful, flawed man's travails in his work and family. Though a more narratively rich execution might have made it a stirring one, "Ferrari" is an engaging film fueled by the intense lead performances of Adam Driver and Penélope Cruz and its director's signature command of hard-hitting action.

Mann's biopic distinguishes itself by rejecting cradle-to-grave sweep for a tight focus on a single year in the life of its subject instead. That year is 1957, and it finds 59-year-old Enzo Ferrari (Driver) in crisis both professionally and personally. His sports car manufacturer is bleeding money and needs to significantly increase sales of its consumer cars to stabilize its finances. Enzo realizes that he can only make this business move by entering his company's racing team in the prestigious Mille Miglia, an open-road, 1,000-mile race across Italy. Winning the race, he calculates, will earn Ferrari the rejuvenated appeal it desperately needs to drive vehicle sales and save itself from dissolution.

Much of the film is dedicated to Enzo and his drivers' preparation for the Mille Miglia and the events of the race itself. Underlying the adrenaline of the racing, however, is the hostile passion of the relationship between Enzo and his wife and business partner, Laura (Cruz). The fiery dynamic between the two strong-willed characters is at the core of the film, rooted in their inability to console each other over the recent death of their only son and Laura's attempt to reckon with Enzo's incessant infidelity. In opposition at the start, the warring spouses only become further entrenched over the problems of a failing business and an illegitimate son as the film unfolds.

Given that the interpersonal action between Enzo and Laura is so integral to its plot, "Ferrari" was bound to succeed or fail on the shoulders of its leads. Thankfully for Mann and his audience, Driver and Cruz both turned in fervent performances that carry the film to dramatic effectiveness.

Driver strikes an imposing figure as the Italian titan of sport and industry who was reverently referred to as "Il Commendatore," or "The Commander," a title that suggests Enzo's dignified position in mid-century Italy. Donning a trench coat and black shades, Driver stalks along the racetrack and watches the drivers operate Ferrari's machines with a stone-faced gaze, physically embodying Enzo's domineering influence over his prized creation. Behind this grave disposition, however, is a vulnerable side to the man that Driver convincingly develops from the very start of his character's arc.

While Driver's performance as Enzo is undoubtedly impressive, anyone who watches "Ferrari" will almost certainly identify Cruz as putting forth the most powerful piece of acting in the film. The actress captures all the sorrow and anger of losing a child and living with an unfaithful partner in her portrayal of Laura, dominating each scene with a wrenching display of emotional woundedness. A highlight comes when the grieving mother visits her son's tomb. She arrives at the cemetery just as her husband is leaving, storming past him without a glance in a march driven equally by sadness and rage. Once inside the mausoleum, Laura approaches her son's portrait and stares at it unblinkingly, Mann holding a long close-up of Cruz's face as tears slowly well in her eyes and drip down her grimacing smile. Using no language, Cruz manages to evoke immense sympathy through her silent, devastating power of expression. The rest of the actress' aching performance spills out of this moment, leading her through trials that showcase Laura's keen survival instinct as a strong woman living in her husband's overbearing shadow.

As for the film's racing scenes, Mann does justice to the bracing power of a Ferrari automobile by shooting clear, stylishly restrained sequences of on-the-road action that fix the viewer's fascination on the superior handling of the cars, not the filmmaking. He cuts deftly between close-ups of drivers switching gears and wide shots of the iconic red cars winding through the Italian countryside, tapping the talents of cinematographer Erik Messerschmidt ("Mank") and editor Pietro Scalia ("Black Hawk Down") to shape the racing sequences' visual dynamism.

The ultimate effect of Mann's cinematic take on the horsepower-crazed sport is one of ultra-realism. "Ferrari" may not feature the most spectacular vehicular action, but in terms of bringing audiences under the hood to experience the pinpoint engineering and brutal physics demanded by auto racing, most other films in the genre cannot compete.

That said, aforementioned films like "Rush" and "Ford v Ferrari" do outstrip Mann's offering in one crucial department: narrative thrust. While "Ferrari" boasts robust acting and precise camerawork in service of Enzo and Laura's compelling story, these separate elements never fully congeal to entirely draw the audience into the cascading stakes of the characters. Scenes stop and start with scant dramatic or thematic force connecting them, a narrative shortcoming that is most pronounced when the Mille Miglia race, the centerpiece of the story, abruptly begins without any buildup of anticipation. The anticlimactic scene is of course excellently acted and handsomely shot, but its lack of emotional kick diagnoses the limiting factor of Mann's otherwise well-crafted film.

"Ferrari," unlike the best racing movies, is perhaps more admirable than it is enjoyable.

COURTESY PHOTO
"Ferrari" features Adam Driver. above, and Penélope Cruz in the starring roles.

WINTER SPORTS UPDATE

By CHARLES CROUNSE
Senior Sports Editor

Women's Swim and Dive

The #20 ranked Panthers have enjoyed a strong start to 2024, sandwiching a loss to Colby College (138–161) with wins against #24 ranked Bowdoin College (153–120) and #23 ranked Bates College (146–141). Chloe Katz '25 continues to be a standout performer for the Panthers, with a handful of other swimmers including Louise Hay '24 and Evelyn Buetow '27 also racking up individual wins. The team recently honored its five graduating seniors before their meet against Bates: Hay, Annika Edwards '24, Hailey Vandenbosch '24, Marian Zottola '24 and Mia Zottola '24.

Men's Swim and Dive

The men's team matched the women with an impressive victory over Bowdoin College to start the calendar year, but they have since gone on to lose meets two in a row, first in a tantalizingly close loss (143.5–155.5) against Colby College and then more comprehensively against Bates College (132–165). There have been quite a few performances to celebrate however, as Luke McNamara '26 and Riley Griffis '24 continue to churn out wins, and the trio of divers Ran Brown '24, Owen White '26 and Liam Smith '24 have routinely topped the podium. The team celebrated a very large senior class on Sunday, with Brown, Edwin Fan '24, Dom Frerichs '24, Griffis, Ben Merz '24, Alex Oh '24, Chris Pedersen '24.5, Andrew Planting '24.5 and Smith were all honored.

Women's Indoor Track and Field

The Panthers kicked off their season on the indoor track this past Saturday, placing second out of five teams at the Snowflake Invitational. Mary Scott Robinson '24, Lilly Wurtz '26, Anna Krouse '25.5, Ciara Dale '24, Macy Daggitt '25 and Michelle Louie '24 all recorded individual wins in the shot put, weight throw, 400m, 500m, 60m and 200m, respectively. The team returns to action this coming weekend at the Middlebury Winter Classic in the Virtue Field House.

COLIN BOURQUE / COURTESY PHOTO
Anna Krouse '25 ran a leg of Middlebury's winning 4x400m relay.

Men's Indoor Track and Field

The men's team similarly placed runners up in the Snowflake Invitational, finishing behind the University of Vermont. Dave Filias '25 bagged a pair of victories in the shot put and weight throw, while Aiden Tam '27, Sam Opawuyi '27 and Joel Kofman '24 all recorded wins in the 60m hurdles, triple jump and pole vault, respectively. The team rested a number of its distance runners, who will return to action with the rest of the team this weekend for the Middlebury Winter Classic.

Alpine Skiing

The alpine team is the only winter squad yet to compete this season after suboptimal slope conditions delayed the alpine portion of the Vermont Carnival this past weekend. The team is currently training for their new opening carnival of the season, which will take place this coming weekend Jan. 19 and 20 at Sugarloaf Mountain hosted by Colby College. The team has been bolstered by the additions of Sara Paradis '27 and Nicholas Unkovskoy '27, both of whom are familiar with the region's terrain after skiing at the Burke Mountain Academy in high school.

Nordic Skiing

The Nordic team kicked off their season at the Vermont Carnival hosted by the University of Vermont. The team put in a strong showing to secure second place behind Dartmouth College ahead of the rescheduled alpine portion of the contest, which will now take place Jan. 26 and 27. Jack Christner '25 earned fifth place in the men's 1.5k sprint, while Logan Moore '25 claimed fifth in the men's 10k freestyle. Maggie Wagner '26 claimed seventh in the women's 1.5k sprint, while Shea Brams '26 took sixth in the women's 10k freestyle.

Women's Hockey

The women's hockey team has impressed this past month, recording two wins and two ties. The Panthers whooped UMass Boston in a 7–0 blowout to close out 2023 before earning a respectable tie against #14 ranked Endicott College to open 2024. The team followed up with a double header against #9 ranked Colby College, drawing the first before overpowering the Mules the following day in a 2–0 win. Middlebury is now ranked fifth in the division and is riding a five game unbeaten run.

Men's Hockey

Things have not been so rosy on the men's side. The team has recorded just one win from their last six games at the time of writing. The Panthers suffered particularly heavy losses against #1 ranked Hobart and William Smith College and #3 ranked Plattsburgh State, falling 1–8 and 0–5, respectively. One bright spot for the team has been the performance of Jin Lee '25, who has tallied four goals and four assists so far this season. With an important slate of NESCAC games on the horizon, the Panthers must turn their fortunes around to make a return to playoff hockey possible.

Men's Basketball

The Panthers are only 8–8 on the season, but they are riding high after stringing together three consecutive wins against NESCAC opponents. The team's recent success has largely been driven by the finishing ability of Noah Osher '23.5, the rebounding of David Brennan '24.5 and the playmaking of Evan Flaks '26. The team still has a number of key NESCAC games yet to come, but momentum is certainly with the Panthers at the moment.

Women's Basketball

The women's basketball team has enjoyed a strong start to 2024, winning five out of six games and picking up several crucial in-conference wins. The Panthers have clawed their way back up the standings and now sit in third place in the NESCAC with a slew of divisional games still to come. Alexa Mustafaj '25 has once again been the standout performer for the Panthers, leading the conference in points per game. Augusta Dixon '24.5 has emerged as another integral member of the team, leading the league in rebounds per game.

Men's Squash

There was concern that the men's squash team's momentum would come to a screeching halt after their home loss to Colby College (3–6) on Jan. 12, but the team has rebounded with comprehensive wins against Bates College (9–0) and Bowdoin College (8–1) to ease any doubts about this team's ability. The men's squash has quickly become one of Middlebury's most exciting teams this season, driven largely by PK Keller '23.5 and Alex Stimpson '23.5, who boast 7–1 and 8–1 records, respectively.

Women's Squash

The team has looked unbeatable for much of the season, earning an 8–1 record and currently sitting on a six game winning streak. Save for a heavy loss (2–7) to Georgetown University to start the calendar year, which can largely be attributed to a lack of match sharpness after a long gap in their competition schedule, the Panthers have been hugely impressive and are certainly looking like a NESCAC heavyweight. Sabrina Schwarz '27 has seemingly nailed down the #1 position on the squad, while fellow first-years Madeline Schwarz '27 and Mariana Reedich '27 are both yet to lose a match this season.

Noah Osher '23.5 Hits 1,000 Career Points, Locking in Key Conference Win

Noah Osher '23.5 is the 27th Middlebury player to hit 1,000 career points. WILL COSTELLO / COURTESY PHOTO

By LEXI LINAFELTER
Sports Editor

Since passing the 500-point milestone, Noah Osher '23.5 has been acutely aware of his path to joining the 1000-point club. Heading into Middlebury's game against Bowdoin College on Jan. 12, his sights were set on the minimum of 22 points he needed to achieve a career-long goal. Averaging 17.9 points per game so far this season, whether or not Osher would hit 1,000 points by the end of the season looked like a certainty heading into last weekend's double competitions against Bowdoin and Colby College, but the captain hoped to do it after just the first game on Friday night.

With just 15 seconds left in the game, Osher scored arguably the most memorable 3-point shot of his career. Not only did it extend Middlebury's lead to four against Bowdoin and all but secure the win, but the shot locked in 23 points scored on the night, bringing his career points scored to 1,001. The shot marked the fifth consecutive game in which Osher put double digits on the board and the sixth time this season he scored over 20 points in a single game.

When the clock hit 00:00, the final score was 71–67 and Osher's name had been added to a new page of the Middlebury record books.

While Osher's scoring efforts throughout his career made this achievement somewhat unsurprising, the moment that sealed his legacy as one of 27 players in program history to surpass 1,000 career points undoubtedly came with emotion and awe.

"It was definitely an emotional moment post-game, calling my dad and reminiscing with my team about the great moments I've had as a Panther," Osher said. "I just felt very proud of myself and lucky to be a part of this program."

Osher has elevated his game by nearly every metric so far this season. After three years, his comfort on the floor, familiarity and confidence against any defensive scheme he faces, and chemistry with his teammates have been key contributors to his success. In addition, the graduation of last year's Division III Player of the Year Alex Sobel '22.5 has opened up opportunities for Osher to step in as the Panthers' primary scoring machine.

"My teammates have been doing a great job getting me the ball in positions to score and my coaches have continually voiced their confidence in my abilities, which have both allowed me to be successful in scoring the ball," Osher told The Campus.

At the same time that the team was celebrating Osher's milestone, the Panthers (8–8 overall this season) enjoyed a critical conference win and set the tone for a strong winning performance (90–78) the following day against Colby.

The brace of conference victories could prove crucial for Middlebury in the coming weeks, especially as the post-season is rapidly approaching. Osher and the Panthers are showing no signs of slowing down, and Osher said he is confident that the team will be able to continue working as a unit and trusting one another to make plays in important moments through the rest of conference play.

The Panthers will return to action this coming Saturday, Jan. 20 to take on Williams College at 2 p.m. in Pepin Gymnasium.

Rookie of the Week: Kate Flynn '27

By CHARLES CROUNSE
Sports Editor

Welcome back to another edition of Rookie of the Week, where we introduce first-year athletes making a major impact in their chosen sport. This week, I sat down with Kate Flynn '27 of women's hockey, who leads the team in points this season. Hailing from Milton, Mass., Flynn discussed her origins in hockey, what it means to be a Panther and her pregame rituals.

Kate Flynn is the Panthers' top scorer with five goals and three assists. COURTESY PHOTO

Charles Crounse: Not every kid learns how to skate. How did you get your start in hockey?

Kate Flynn: My dad played college hockey, and he first started getting my brother in the sport. I was playing soccer at the time, but I went to my brothers' games frequently. I don't know if it was seeing all the cool hockey gear he got to wear or just watching the game itself, but I think it just made me want to try it too. As soon as I got out on the ice, I just fell in love with skating and the game and the rest is history.

CC: Once you became a hockey player, how did you land on your current position as a forward?

KF: When I played boys' hockey when I was younger, I actually played defense, but when I moved to girls' hockey, I think my natural skating ability led my coaches to make me a forward. I've been a forward for more or less my whole career as a result.

CC: Since you started playing at Middlebury, you've quickly become an important member of the team, and currently lead the Panthers in goal involvements with five goals and three assists. Is that something you expected when you first got here?

KF: Coming into the season, I think I was more curious than anything. I just wanted to see how my game matched up to that of a high-level college team, and I was eager to figure out my role on the team. The stats are great, but there are still a lot of games left to be played and I really just want to focus on trying to help my team.

CC: Middlebury has been one of the strongest teams in Division III hockey in recent years, particularly after their 27–0 season two years ago. The program has won 12 NESCAC championships and four national titles, too. Do you feel any pressure when putting on the Middlebury jersey given the success of the program?

KF: I wouldn't say there's any pressure. I feel like it's more pride getting to wear the "M" on my jersey and to go out there, play for my school, play for my program and play for my teammates. I think that's a really cool thing that not a lot of people get to do, so it's more of a privilege than anything.

CC: Do you have any pre-game rituals or superstitions?

KF: I have two big superstitions I would say. On game day, you'll usually find me on the ice pretty early in the morning just trying to shake out the legs, work on a few things, and get some touches in before the game. Right before the warm ups I like to do a meditation routine just to clear my mind and get dialed in to focus on the game.

CC: You've been at school for about five months now. Have you had a favorite Middlebury moment so far?

KF: I mean, that's tough because there have been a lot of great moments, between meeting new people, having new experiences and being up here in Vermont. For hockey, I'd say my favorite moment was probably our first game of the year against Trinity. I feel like the emotions were high in general because it was our first game of the year, but I think it was even more special because it was my first college hockey game ever. It's something that I've dreamed of doing ever since I was a little kid, so just getting to put on that jersey and have my parents watching from the stands was a really special moment that I will never forget.

Editor's Note: this interview has been lightly edited for brevity and clarity.